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**Wise Sayings and Proverbs
among
Andaandi and Mattokki speaking Nubians**

presented by

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born on 21 March 1962
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Proverbs ... direct us as we apply them within the framework of our Nubian way of life. It doesn't matter whether we are in our fields, villages or the cities. These proverbs have had a major part in establishing our Nubian values of trust and generosity. (MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994)

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Coptic deacon George Fathī from Alexandria. I became acquainted with George Fathī in 1998 during my studies at Alexandria University. He radiated something of Jesus Christ that I have rarely experienced with other Christians. He was physically so weak that he could not even join us when swimming in the Mediterranean. Yet, he cared for Christians and Muslims alike, even setting up a day clinic for Alexandrian citizens in need. Two fundamentalist brothers were annoyed to such an extent by George's love for everyone, including their mother, that he died as a martyr in 2009. Still, his family told me that if George Fathī could be asked he would plead forgiveness for these two brothers.

Whenever I go to Alexandria in order to meet my Nubian friends I miss meeting this truly remarkable person. George Fathī has very much impacted my life.

Marcus Jaeger, Autumn 2024

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Conventions and Abbreviations

Arabic names and terms are transliterated according to the guidelines of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES).¹ When citing names of individual authors, I adopt the spelling used in English language publications (e.g.: Haggag Hassan Oddoul) even if these deviate from the standard transliteration.

The abbreviations for the glossing of Nubian texts is based on an adapted set of the Leipzig glossing rules and abbreviations:²

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
AD	adessive
ADJ	adjective
ADJR	adjetiviser
ADV	adverb
ALL	allative
CAUS	causative
CO	conjunction connecting words, phrases and sentences mostly with the meaning ‘and’ (added to the Leipzig glossing rules)
COM	comitative
COND	conditional
COMP	comparative (different from the Leipzig glossing rules where COMP stands for ‘complementizer’)
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative

¹ Cf. www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-file-manager/file/57d83390f6ea5a022234b400/TransChart.pdf [last accessed on 6 October 2021]

² Cf. www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php [last accessed on 15 October 2020]; with further abbreviations from JAKOBI 2021.

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DISC	discourse marker
EMPH	emphatic
FOC	focus
GEN	genitive
HUM	human referent
IMP	imperative
INCH	inchoative
INDF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
INT	interjection
INTF	intensifier
IS	indirect speech
JUS	jussive mood (added to the Leipzig glossing rules)
LOC	locative
LV	loaned verb
N	noun
NEG	negation
NEUT	marker of the so-called ‘present tense’ ³
NR	nominalizer (while the Leipzig glossing abbreviations write NMLZ I mark it as NR in order to be coherent with VR, ADJR)
OPT	optative
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PL:OBJ	plural object

³ Based on AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 130ff.

PLUR	pluractional ⁴
POL	polite
PTC	participle (while the Leipzig glossing abbreviations use PTCP, I have shortened it, as I distinguish between the imperfective and the perfective participle, PTC:IPF and PTC:PF)
POSS	possessive
PROG	progressive
PRT1/2	preterit 1/2
Q	question, interrogative marker
QUAL	qualifier (added to the Leipzig glossing abbreviations)
REFL	reflexive
REPT	repetitive
SG	singular
SIM	similative
SRC	source
STAT	stative
SUB	subordinator
TAM	tense-aspect-modality (added to the Leipzig glossing abbreviations)
TMP	temporal (added to the Leipzig glossing abbreviations)
TR	transitive
V	Verb

⁴ Based on DIMMENDAAL 2014: 58.

1. Introduction

This work explores some aspects of ethnic consciousness and the construction of identity among the Andaandi/Dongolawi and Mattokki/Kenzi Nubians in the Sudan and Egypt by investigating their proverbs. Proverbs and their metaphors provide a platform for gaining an insight into the diversity of Nubians' lives, their languages and their rich sociocultural traits.

Writing down Nubian proverbs, explaining them against the background of a long Nubian history, heritage and culture,⁵ and making them available to a wider audience, offers contemporary Nubians⁶ in a fast-changing world a place for interaction with some aspects of their past. It transports the wisdom and identity of their ancestors into the present, and creates an archive of language and culture documentation hosting the abundant Nubian oral arts that many fear will soon be lost.

With modern means of knowledge distribution, proverbial research is framed within a global context. Nubians, including transnational Nubians, and

⁵ Many Nubians are aware that heritage and traditions (*turāth*) are fluid, as became apparent in a Nubian club in Cairo in 2022 during a presentation about '*turāth*'. In this paper, 'heritage' and 'tradition'/'traditional' do not signify anything static.

In the same way, 'culture' does not imply anything static or easily to be demarcated from another 'culture'. If culture is documented, as in this thesis, it mirrors the state of how humans think, act and live at a certain point of time, subject to constant change (MERZ 2020: 127). When discussing the implications of the Covid-19 measures on Nubian culture with Nubians (2022 and 2023, p.c.), such change became obvious. As I visited Nubia over a long period, some cultural aspects are approached diachronically. In order to stress that 'culture' is dynamic and active, I frequently speak of 'sociocultural traits'.

Arabic-speaking Nubians use the Arabic term *ثقافة* (*thaqāfa*). It means "refinement; education", also "civilization" (WEHR 1980: 104). The Nubian 'Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage' (cf. JAEGER 2008) includes the term in its name.

⁶ Although I speak of 'Nubians' and 'Nubian culture', I am aware that 'Nubians' form a diverse ethnicity. It does not do justice to generalize Nubian sociolinguistic and sociocultural traits. In general, I will stay with this term, adding an adjective where appropriate (e.g. 'contemporary') because being more distinctive would make reading hard.

interested scholars may access the wisdom formerly passed on locally and benefit from it.

I begin by presenting insights into the Andaandi/Dongolawi and Mattokki/Kenzi languages, originating from Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt, and the people speaking those languages, some of whom became research participants.⁷ That is followed by more general information and an overview of the following chapters.

1.1. Andaandi and Mattokki Languages and Ethnicities

The location of the Dongolawi/Danágla Nubians and the Kenzi/Kenuzi/Kunūzi/Kanūzi Nubians is shown on the map (Figure 1). Their main settlements are along the river Nile. In this thesis I usually begin in the south (i.e. with the ‘Dongolawi’), moving to the north (i.e. the Mattokki). ‘Dongolawi’, is an exonym. When speaking in their ethnic language they call it *Andaandi* (meaning literally ‘which belongs to us’), with no specific name referring to their ethnicity. Charles H. Armbruster translates *andaandi* as ‘Dóngola Nubian’.⁸ *oshkir* is a term applied by Nobiin speakers living north of the Dongolawi. Its etymological meaning is interpreted in different ways. Some regard it as the plural of Nobiin *oshi*

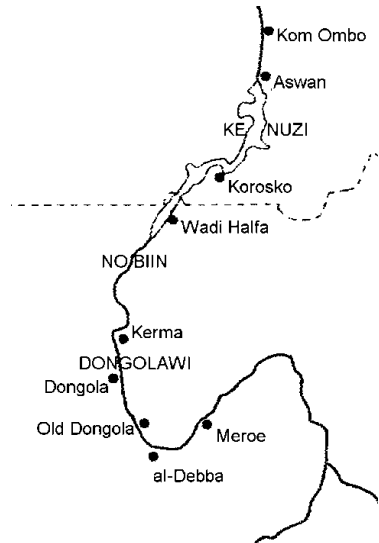


Figure 1: The Nile Nubian Valley – Adopted with slight changes from JAKOBI and KÜMMERLE 1993.

⁷ Even though some Nubians speak of ‘the Nubian language’ there is more than one Nubian language. A preliminary list of Nubian languages is found in the Ethnologue (LEWIS and SIMONS and FENNIG 2013). Also, geographical boundaries of language and culture do not necessarily overlap. – Both languages belong to the Nilo-Saharan language phylum.

⁸ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 15.

meaning ‘slaves’;⁹ others analyse =*kir* as a causative clitic implying ‘enslaver’.¹⁰ When speaking Arabic, the Dongolawi people call themselves *dungulanderi* (meaning ‘I am from Dongola’) or more recently due to Arabic influence *dungulawi*.

Dongolawi view the Dongola Reach from about Old Dongola¹¹ to Kerma in the Republic of the Sudan as their homeland, where until recently Andaandi was the language used predominantly for communication. In order to find work outside of agriculture members of that group moved first to Khartoum, then from about 1938 onward to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States.¹² Nowadays, Europe and North America are preferred destinations.

‘Kunūzi’ for the ethnicity and ‘Kenzi’ for the language are also exonyms. When speaking in their ethnic language, both the language and the ethnicity are named *Mattokki*.¹³ In the past Dongolawi also used to call that ethnicity and its language *Mattokki*.¹⁴ G. von Massenbach, who is painstakingly precise, lists *Mattokki* in her dictionary only for the ethnicity.¹⁵ When speaking Arabic *Mattokki* use the name ‘Kenūz’ for the ethnicity and ‘Kenzi’ for the language. One also finds the name ‘Kenzi-Dongolawi’,¹⁶ combining

⁹ E.g. some Nobiin speakers at the University of Khartoum 2004, p.c. – WERNER (1987: 372) writes *òsshí*; *oshshi* if tone is omitted and gemination made explicit.

¹⁰ RILLY 2008: 218+221.

¹¹ Old Dongola was the capital of the medieval Nubian kingdom where Old Nubian was spoken, written in the Nubian script. Old Nubian was rediscovered first in 1811 and then deciphered and published at the beginning of the 20th century. (SCHÄFER and SCHMIDT 1906; GRIFFITH 1909: 545; and GRIFFITH 1913: 3) Old Dongola is not to be confused with modern-day Dongola town which is the centre of the Dongola Reach.

¹² El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2010, p.c.

¹³ Some Nubians as one *Mattokki* lady (2022, p.c.) prefer the more general term ‘Nubia’. In the early 20th century the name *Mattokki* was used by the *Fadijja* (SCHÄFER 1917: 39). – *Mattokki* has differing interpretations.

¹⁴ Nāsr ‘Ali 2004, p.c. ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 145) has *mottókki* and *muttókki*.

¹⁵ MASSENBACH 1933: 195. SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN (1909: 14) names the ethnicity ‘Matokya’ but gives the language no specific name.

¹⁶ Cf. WERNER 1987: 77 and the Nubian YÜSIF SAMBĀJ 1998. In the early stages of my research I also used the term, see JAEGER and KAMAL HUSSEIN 2012. This is due

both groups into one. Thus far, I have not heard any Mattokki or Dongolawi using it.

One further name frequently used by Arabs and Nubians to describe the Nubian languages is *ruṭāna*.¹⁷ In the Sudan it may not necessarily have a negative connotation as other non-Arabic Sudanese languages are also called *ruṭāna*.¹⁸ Some Dongolawi still remember being taught in the mosque that God had created good and evil, paradise and hell. In the same way, God had created the (good) Arabic language and the (evil) *ruṭāna*.¹⁹

Such statements also occur within academia. A professor of linguistics at Khartoum University allegedly said: “English and Arabic have grammars; therefore they can be analysed. However, the [Sudanese] minority languages ... have no grammar, and therefore, no one can describe or analyse them.”²⁰ Similarly, in 2008 I met a Sudanese lecturer from another university in Khartoum who claimed that Andaandi had no grammar. Therefore, Nubian grassroots scholars and ‘language activists’²¹ avoid the term *ruṭāna*.

to their similarity: “[T]he Kanūz and Danágla ... bear obvious resemblances to one another and their languages are similar.” (MACMICHAEL 1967: 13) Also the Ethnologue (LEWIS 2009) up to its sixteenth edition considered Andaandi/Dongolawi and Mattokki/Kenzi as one language. That changed from the seventeenth edition onward (LEWIS and SIMONS and FENNIG 2013).

¹⁷ EL-SAID BADAWEI and HINDS 1986: 341; and WEHR 1980: 345. The term means “incomprehensible language”, “gibberish”.

¹⁸ Old Dongolawi man in Qatar 2010, p.c.; and TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 182. Even the Mattokki scholar OSSAMA A.W. ABDEL MEGUID (2015: 440) equates Andaandi with “Rotana”.

¹⁹ Andaandi speaker from Aartigaasha 2006, p.c.

²⁰ GILLEY 2007: 458.

²¹ The term ‘language activist’ is a self-designation by English-speaking Nubians who are actively researching or promoting their languages. FLOREY (2008: 121) names them ‘*internal* language activists’ in contrast to ‘*external*’ (outsider) ones. Language activism can be defined as “energetic action focused on language use in order to create, influence and change existing language policies.” (COMBS and PENFIELD 2012: 462) As nearly all Nubian research participants are not politically active in the sense of the definition, I rarely use the term ‘language activist’.

‘grassroots linguists’ is a term used for instance by the wikitongues foundation (wikitongues.org; last accessed on 20 November 2021). I prefer ‘grassroots scholars’,

In this thesis I employ the terms ‘Andaandi’ and ‘Mattokki’ when speaking about the language. When speaking about the ethnicity I say ‘Dongolawi’ and ‘Mattokki’ as there is no endonym for the first term.²²

Until 1963/64 the Mattokki who had not moved to the Egyptian cities for work purposes were living in the area from north of Korosko to the first cataract south of Aswan, the northern part of Lower Nubia,²³ 650 km from Dongola. Except for a few Arabic-speaking villages their immediate neighbours to the south were the Nobiin-speaking Fadijja²⁴ followed by other Nobiin-speaking Nubian communities (Halfawi, Sukkot, Mahas), with the Mahas being the northern neighbours of the Dongolawi.

In the past Mattokki villages were more like hamlets spread over a district.²⁵ The Mattokki villages around Kom Ombo only came into being at the time of the construction of the Aswan High Dam and the Nubians’ resettlement²⁶ from Lower Nubia to the newly built villages in 1963/1964, some of them

as it underlines that many research participants do not limit themselves to matters of language, but also deal with history and cultural issues. They are ‘grassroots’ as nearly all of them did not study these topics formally.

²² The term ‘Noba’ very likely originated with the Meroites, was later used by the Greeks and the Romans, and thus began as an exonym, see RILLY 2008: 218. Nowadays, ‘Noba’ and ‘Nubians’ have become insider designations.

²³ Usually ‘Lower Nubia’ designates the area between the second and the first cataract; cf. OBLUSKI 2010: 607.

²⁴ There is no geminated voiced affricate in Nubian languages. Fadijja Nubians use this form, as the spelling ‘Fadicca’ has led people to pronounce it as ‘Fadikka’ (Maher Habbob 2022, p.c.).

²⁵ FRÖHLICH 1911: 4. The same goes for the Dongola Reach where the villages are also more like districts.

²⁶ HOMEYER (2020: 15) calls it “dislocation”. One could also talk of a kind of ‘dispossession’ as the compensations did not cover the actual loss incurred.

I distinguish between the Aswan Dam opened in 1902 and enlarged in 1912 and 1933, the Aswan High Dam opened in 1964, and the Merowe High Dam in the Sudan opened in 2009.

even developing into small towns (e.g. Toshke). The time before 1963/64 became “a once glorious past”,²⁷ in spite of all its difficulties.

In this thesis the Arabic term *hijra* stands for the resettlement, as many Mattokki Nubians use this word when speaking about their past in Arabic. Another Arabic term is *tahjīr*, a term that emphasises the forced relocation of Nubians and its ongoing aspect.²⁸ Unfortunately, even in some western popular publications about the building of the Aswan High Dam the role of Nubians and their *hijra* are made invisible.²⁹

Contemporary Mattokki in the Arab Republic of Egypt are concentrated in the area of Kom Ombo and around Aswan. They speak Mattokki and increasingly Arabic. In order to find work, many Mattokki move to the urban centres in Northern Egypt, especially Cairo, Alexandria, and along the Suez Canal, also the Arabian Peninsula. They are less visible in Western Europe and North America than the Dongolawi.

Today we find a diglossic situation in the Dongola Reach and in the Mattokki villages around Kom Ombo and Aswan. Arabic is spoken at work, at school, in the market place, at Friday prayer; Andaandi or Mattokki only at home, maybe in situations related to agricultural work. Even in Nubian homes Arabic is increasingly replacing Andaandi and Mattokki among both men and women, due to Arabic being perceived as more prestigious.³⁰ Television has had a great impact on that. Many children of Andaandi and Mattokki speakers understand only a little Andaandi or Mattokki, a sign of lacking inter-generational transmission, but also a sign that both languages are non-

²⁷ Expression taken from FABIAN (2014: 9). Among Egyptian Nubians that leads to contrasting a more positive past and a more gloomy present.

²⁸ Alia Mosallam 2017, p.c.; and based on her HOMEYER 2020: 40. Their point of view is confirmed by various Nubians (including Halfawi and Mahas), since about 2017 more so than before. To them *hijra* means a voluntary abandonment.

²⁹ As in MORROW 2021.

³⁰ There are different registers of Arabic, with Andaandi speaking Sudanese Colloquial Arabic (SCA) and Mattokki speaking different variants of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), and both learning Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) at school. Cf. REEM BASSIOUNEY 2020.

dominant.³¹ There are practically no opportunities to study Nubian at Egyptian universities. Typically, even in an article about language policy and linguistic diversity in Egypt authored by an Egyptian academic, Nubian is ignored.³²

Still, among the Dongolawi and Mattokki many traditions and behaviours are kept that differ from Arab ones. Most visitors to the Nubian villages observe their cleanliness. Until recently houses were single storey only. Nowadays, many houses are enlarged with a second or even third floor as more and more Nubians are employed on the Arabian Peninsula where work is better paid. Unfortunately, upper floors may overlook neighbouring private courtyards.

From personal observation, Sudanese society incorporates more aspects of Nubian culture than Egyptian society does. Therefore, in this thesis, examples from the Sudan outside of Sudanese Nubia will be more frequent than instances taken from Egypt outside of Egyptian Nubia.

1.2. Acknowledgements

First and foremost I express my thanks to all the speakers of Andaandi and Mattokki Nubian and their families whom I met and stayed with for their generous and long-time support and input, their trust and assistance. Although I will highlight a few in particular, that in no way demeans the contribution of other Nile Nubians. The order is Andaandi speakers first and then Mattokki speakers, mainly in alphabetical order. It does not indicate any preference.

The late AHMAD HAMZA from Lebeb village, better known as the birthplace of the Mahdi Muḥammad Aḥmad, eagerly awaited our regular conversations, always ready to present some further aspects of Nubian history and sociocultural traits. His wife frequently joined us. He is probably the Dongolawi I spent the most time with.

³¹ I prefer the term ‘non-dominant language’ to ‘minority language’ and to ‘local language’, as the first term indicates the presence of a dominant language and emphasises power relations. The second term implies connotations to human rights. The third term ties the Nubian languages too much to a geographical place.

³² As in REEM BASSIOUNEY 2020.

With EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI from Khannaag village, south of Dongola, I discussed many topics this thesis deals with. He invited me to stay in his houses in Doha (Qatar) and Khartoum, made it possible for me and my family to frequently use his parents' home in Khannaag, close to Ḥāmid Khabīr's house, and also introduced me to the Dongolawi community in Doha. In return he visited us in Cologne. He read parts of chapter 3 and commented on them.

FU'ĀD 'AKŪD from Nawwa, near Old Dongola, was the first Dongolawi grassroots scholar I became acquainted with. Early in my research he was employed by the 'Nubian Documentation and Studies Centre' in Cairo.

ḤĀMID KHABĪR AL-SHAIKH from Khannaag set me on the topic of this thesis. I enjoy sitting with him discussing respectfully our points of view on nearly everything. He will be introduced in more detail in subchapter 3.6.

KAMAL HUSSEIN from Urbi village, south of Dongola, was the first to introduce me to a Dongolawi village where I could hear Andaandi spoken all day long. In 2005 he and the villagers of Urbi performed the most wonderful display of Nubian culture I have ever seen. He often has new ideas about what should be researched in Andaandi. He most patiently answers my questions. Every time we meet, I learn more about the Andaandi language and the wisdom imbedded in Dongolawi culture. We continue writing joint papers.

SHAWQI 'ABD AL-'AZĪZ from Hamennaarti, north of Dongola, is a quiet person. Yet when he decides to pass on some insights into Andaandi language and Dongolawi culture, a depth of knowledge streams out from him. In Nubian orthography he is most meticulous.

Other Dongolawi living in the Dongola Reach that participated in the research were:

'Abd al-'Athīm 'Abd al-Hamīd from Merowaarti East, 'Abd al-'Azīz Maglaq from Irtide, 'Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad from Gurunti, 'Abd al-Rāziq Muḥammad from Urbi, AḤMAD SĀTI from Buunaarti (near Merowaarti),³³ female relatives of the late Aḥmad Sulaymān from Imaani, al-Amīn Muḥammad al-Amīn from Lebeb, al-Sādiq 'Abd al-Raḥmān from Lebeb,

³³ In these lists, names of Nubians who actively collected Nubian proverbs, wrote them down informally and gave them to me, are written in small capital letters.

al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl from Magaasir Island, ‘Ammār Ya’qūb from Magaasir Island, ‘Amr Nūr al-Dīn from Kabtood, Anas Muḥi al-Dīn from Imaani, Idrīs Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from Lebeb, Khālīd Ḥajj from Lebeb, Mahir Muḥammad from Urbi, Mālik Aḥmad from Imaani, Megdi ‘Ali from Magaasir, Muḥammad Ṣālīḥ from Seleem 3, Muḥi al-Dīn al-Ḥasan from Merowaarti East, mother of Rodwan Uthmān from Marraghah, Rufā’i ‘Abd al-Latīf from Khannaag, ‘Umar Aḥmad Bushara from Seleem 2.

Dongolawi living mainly in Khartoum (at least before the war) that participated in the research were:

Abāthīr ‘Abdullahi Samiltood from Agade, ‘Abd al-Latīf Sid Aḥmad from Lebeb, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood from Agade, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ṭālib from Kome Island, ‘Abdullahi Naṣr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm from Hamu, ‘Adel ‘Abd al-Wahab from Selagi, AMNA MUṢṬAFA and relatives from Binna, ‘Alā al-Dīn Khayri from Seleem 3, Badr al-Dīn Jalāl from Magaasir Island, Bashīr ‘Abdallah from Dibela, Faḡīri Muḥammad from Seleem 3, Fathīya Ḥajj Ḥamed from Binna, Fawaz Muḥammad from Teti, Fu’ād ‘Akūd from Nawwa, Ḥisayn Hamza from Binna Island, Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Samiltood from Agade, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid from Binna, Muḥammad Ḥasan from Tura’, Muḥammad ‘Awaḍ from Merowaarti, MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF from Shebatood, Mu’amr al-Fīl from Kultoos, Muṣṭafa Hājirtōd from Koyt, Muṣṭafa Samiltood from Agade, Sāmi ‘Abdallah from Aartigaasha Island, Sayida Nāsir ‘Abd al-Khāliq from Khannaag, Sayid Kunna from Magaasir Island, Tāriq ‘Abd al-Latīf from Shaikh Shariif.

Dongolawi living mainly in the diaspora that participated in the research were:

‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadiq ‘Ālim from Dembo, ‘Abd al-Bāṣit Hāj from Shebatood, ‘Abd al-Hādi Mekki from Wad Nimeiri, ‘Abd al-Illah ‘Abd al-Rāziq from Magaasir Island, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān from Irtide, Abu Bakr Khayri from Selagi, Akashe Muḥammad Yazīn from Magaasir Island, Akram Ḥasan Arbaab from Wad Nimeiri, ‘Ali Ḥasan from Khandaq, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Ḥamid from Maragha, Fādi Ibrāhīm from Selagi, Hishām Bashīr from Magaasir Island, Maḥmūd Sāti from Tabo, wife of the late Maḥmūd Sa’īd from Irtide, Nemat Abdalrahman from Magaasir Island, Ordesse Ḥamed from Dibela, Said ‘Abd al-Raḥman from Magaasir Island, Samira El-Melik-Ziadah

from Binna Island, Taha ‘Abd al-Majīd Taha from Magaasir Island, Thourya Muḥammad from Binna.

In Cairo and Alexandria I attended Mattokki language classes. My first teacher was MAḤJŪB MĪRGHANI from Dehemiit who taught at the Meriyye Club in Alexandria. He passed away in 2008. MEKKI MUḤAMMAD from Maharraga was one of the teachers from whom I learnt writing Nubian in Nubian script. ‘UMAR ḤASAN “al-Deboodi” from Debood was very active in language development and teaching. Each time I stayed in Cairo I visited his home and we spent a whole day discussing how to improve teaching Mattokki literacy and language.³⁴ Another language teacher, MAMDŪḤ SERĀJ from Umbarakaab, also most willingly shared his knowledge with me.

‘ABD AL-RAḤMAN ‘AWAD from Seyaale is a researcher of Nubian history with the Egyptian ministry of culture, journalist of the ‘Aswan’ monthly newspaper, and writes the histories of Fadijja and Mattokki Nubians and Arabs in Arabic. He is probably the Mattokki I visited most in the Egyptian cities.

FATHĪ ‘ABD AL-SAYID from Dakke and living in Dehemiit is probably the Mattokki whom I visited most in the resettlement villages, including meals and overnight stays. He introduced me to many other Mattokki who then were willing to share the proverbs they remembered.

MUḤAMMAD “Samīr” NIJM from Debood, before the *hijra* the Mattokki village closest to Aswan, has a position of responsibility in the Kenzi Club in Alexandria. Before my first visit to a Mattokki resettlement village he phoned a relative, MUḤAMMAD MUḤAMMAD MĪRGHANI, who provided a warm welcome. Later he took me twice on the Nubian train from Alexandria to Aswan and the Nubian villages that only operates during the *ʿīd al-Adḥa*, the Islamic Feast of Sacrifice. Friendships developed that last until today. He introduced me to the family of ḤAJJA ‘ATIĀT ṢĀBR from Debood, for the first time enabling me to do research with women.

MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤĪ and from Elephantine Island close to Aswan is very much involved in Mattokki language activities. I warmly recommend a visit

³⁴ Sadly he died at an early age. I miss the exchange of ideas with him. For more information about ‘Umar Ḥasan’s work, see JAEGER 2008.

to the museum ‘Animalia’ in his house, allowing an insider’s view into life in Nubia, Nubian history, flora and fauna.³⁵ Each time I visit him and we are sitting overlooking Nubian agriculture he offers some new insights. I may turn up even with my most difficult questions.

The late UMM ḤAMDI, her late husband and her children, among them YĀSIR and SARA MUḤAMMAD from Umbarakaab were the first Nubians to welcome me into their home and to let me experience the depth of informal conversations among Nubians, of *wanasa*.

Other Mattokki living in the Aswan and Kom Ombo region that participated in the research were:

‘Abd al-Hakīm ‘Abdu from Tingaar, ‘Abd al-Min‘am ‘Awaḍ from Merwaw, female relatives of ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf from Dakke, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Abd al-Qādir from Dehemiit, ‘Abd al-Zaher Muḥi al-Dīn from Dakke, ‘Abd al-Raziq ‘Abd al-Majīd from Toshke West, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim from Dakke and Heesa Island, Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz from West Aswan, Aḥmad ‘Ali Muḥammad from Elephantine Island, Aḥmad Gumma‘ from Dehemiit, Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz from Dehemiit,³⁶ Ajīb Jabāli from Toshke West, ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ from Jebel Togoog, female relatives of the late ‘Az al-Dīn Qāsim from Debood, ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad ‘Abdallah from Debood and Dehemiit, ‘Ali Aḥmad ‘Ali from Elephantine Island, ‘Amm Sali and his wife from Tingaar, al-Ḥajj ‘Awaḍ ‘Ali Maḥmūd from Kalaabshe and Abuhoor, Asmaa A. Kenawy from Elephantine Island,³⁷ Dahab Ḥisayn Dahab from Toshke West, Dunya ‘Abd al-Fataḥ from West Sehel, Fāṭma ‘Abd al-Sayid from Dakke, Fawzi Ṭāhir ‘Uthmān from Seyaale, Fayza from Toshke, Ḥammad Nūr from Allaagi, Ḥisayn Shellāli from Sehel Island, Ismā‘īl al-‘Abādi from Debood, Jabāli Ajīb Jabāli from Toshke West, Jamāl ‘Abdullahi Hisayn from Kalaabshe, Khālīd ‘Awaḍ Karār from Seyaale,

³⁵ ‘Animalia’ does not have a web presence on its own. One internet resource is www.lonelyplanet.com/egypt/nile-valley/aswan/attractions/animalia/a/poi-sig/1136162/355240 [last accessed on 28 August 2023]

³⁶ He is the author of different studies on Mattokki that will be introduced in section 2.2.3.

³⁷ She is the author of of ASMAA A. KENAWY (2023) that aims to give tourists in Egypt the opportunity to learn Mattokki Nubian.

Khālīd Kalos from Elephantine Island, Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Sayid from Dakke, the late Maḥmūd Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rahīm from Toshke West, Mamdūh Salām from Dakke, Magdi Maḥmūd from Dakke, Muḥammad ‘Abdallah from Jebel Togoog, the sister of Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rahīm from Dakke, the late Muḥammad ‘Abdu Sāleḥ from Toshke East,³⁸ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Bāsīt (Sha‘bān Berber) from West Sehel, the late Muḥammad Gum‘a from Toshke West, Muḥammad Jabāli from Toshke West, Muḥarram Maḥmūd al-Ṭayyib from Allaagi, Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ from Merwaw, Muṣṭafa Rabī’ from Heesa Island, Dr Nāsir al-Gum‘a from Kalaabshe, Rabī’ Yūnis from Allaagi, Ṣabri Aḥmad from Debood, Samīr Ramaḍān from Debood, the late Sayid al-Ḥasan Muḥammad Khair from Aniiba, Sayid Muḥammad Aḥmad from Awaḍ Island, Sharīf ‘Abd al-Min‘am from Tingaar, Taha ‘Abdu Salīm from Kalaabshe, Zizī Ṣiyām from Tingaar, Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir from Dakke.

Mattokki living mainly in Cairo and Alexandria that participated in the research were:

‘Adel Fakharāny from Umbarakaab, ‘Adīla Sulaymān from Dehemiit, Aḥmad Ismā‘īl from Masmas, Ashūr Radwan from Dehemiit, Faḍl Aḥmad ‘Awaḍ from Umbarakaab, Hanā Ṣalāh and her mother from Abuhoor, Jamāl ‘Abd al-Jalīl from Dakke and Heesa Island, KHAYRIA MŪSA from Maharraga, Thābit “Jerrah” Zāki from Umbarakaab, the late ‘Umar Ḥasan’s mother from Debood, ‘Umar Ḥasan Shilluk from Debood.

Mattokki living mainly in the diaspora that participated in the research were: Aḥmad Ūrabi from Umbarakaab, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān Ḥasan from Kushtamne West, Ramaḍān Muḥammad Ḥasan from Allaagi.

Additionally I want to mention three Nubians that belong neither to the Andaandi nor the Mattokki group:

The Halfawi ABDEL HALIM SABBAR was highly respected in the Dongolawi community. He is the most critical Nubian I ever met, questioning any thesis until properly proved. He explained historical and environmental backgrounds of Nubian culture.

³⁸ While he was an Arab he lived all his life in a Fadijja- and Mattokki-speaking village where he was well-integrated.

MUHAMMAD JALAL HASHIM from the Sukkot region enabled my first extended visit in a Dongolawi village. The friendships he established on my behalf early in my research have stood the test of time. Sadly in 2023 he lost one of his legs due to the war between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in the Sudan. It shows how fragile the life of so many of my Nubian friends and co-workers is.

The Fadijja MAHER HABBOB welcomed me to the Nubian *turāth* [heritage] Club in Cairo early in my research. He is eager for outsiders to study the Nubian languages and cultures and provided many insights into Nubian culture from a Fadijja perspective. He will be introduced in detail in subchapter 3.7.

Many more Nubians supported me in different ways other than collecting and explaining the proverbs.

Acknowledgements - Supervisors

Discussing African studies topics with Prof ANNE STORCH is always a joy. She points out additional aspects and new methodology that enhance my research. After postponing my write-up for a couple of years she included me in her PhD class again, fully understanding my situation.

Due to our move to Switzerland while writing the thesis PD Dr. ANGELIKA MIETZNER supports me by offering hospitality when staying in Cologne. It is wonderful to discuss African studies in informal surroundings.

Acknowledgements - Other advisors and supporters

If not indicated otherwise, MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) and ECA (Egyptian Colloquial Arabic) proverbs corresponding to Nubian proverbs were added by MUHAMMAD ‘ALI ‘ABD AL-FATAH from Egypt. In some cases he also provided the English translation.

Dr ANGELIKA JAKOBI’s long-term commitment to Nubians and her list of publications co-authored with Nubians are impressive.³⁹ She discussed many linguistic issues and most grammatical categories, suffixes and clitics occurring in this thesis with me, pointing out inconsistencies, based on her

³⁹ As JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015 and 2016.

extensive insights into all Nubian languages. Some of that I have included in subchapter 3.11 and passed on to other research participants.

Dr ARMGARD GOO-GRAUER was a student of Gertrud von Massenbach and Rolf Herzog. She lived in the Mattokki villages just before the Nubian *hijra* in 1963/64, accompanied its inhabitants on their boat journey to Shellal near Aswan during the *hijra* and visited the resettlement villages in their early days. She speaks Mattokki better than any other contemporary researcher of Nubian I know and has been very interested in, appreciative and supportive of my research. She commented especially on semantic domains 1 ‘River’, 2 ‘Waterwheel’, and 5 ‘Agriculture: Farming’. We discussed many other topics of Nubian society in all its diversity, and compared what I had heard from various Nubians about life in Lower Nubia prior to the *hijra*, collected 35 to 60 years after the *hijra*, with her own notes, written up during and shortly after the *hijra*.

Prof EBERHARD BERTSCH, coming from a computer science background like myself, read chapters 2 and 3, and commented on methodological aspects. We enjoyed many good discussions.

Dr JULIANE KABISCH-LINDENLAUB checked most of this thesis for accuracy of expressions and logic of conclusions, making the whole thesis easier to read. I thank her for the many critical questions she asked.

Prof RICHARD LOBBAN and Prof CAROLYN FLUEHR-LOBBAN read an early version of this thesis and commented on it. One of my field trips in Nubia I did jointly with Richard Lobban and noticed the high degree of acceptance he received. They invited me to use their extensive private library resulting in many insightful discussions about Nubia at the meal tables. I am overwhelmed by their hospitality.

DEREK CHEESEMAN and GEOFFREY SUTTON, both from the UK, contributed to translating German quotes into English and looking for corresponding English proverbs, wise sayings and idioms. ELIZABETH NEWPORT who had lived in the Dongola Reach in the 1980s, KIRSTY ROWAN, and RUTH MALLARD joined them in correcting English grammar and style.

EVMARIE HOPPE (until 2021) and SABINE RAHMANI (from 2022 onward) are working with the German office of SPM (Sudan=Pionier Mission, nowadays EMO) that founded the hospital *al-Germaniya* in Aswan and in particular

serves Egyptian Nubians. Both provided access to the EMO/SPM library and archives where unpublished manuscripts from Samuel Ali Hissein are kept and patiently answered questions regarding the SPM's history.

GERALD LAUCHE and his family who were working at *al-Germaniya* in Aswan helped me to get to know Aswan and the Nubian resettlement villages when I first went there in 1995. They invited me for many meals, Gerald opened his extensive library of Nubian books and papers for me and was willing to answer all my questions. He sadly passed away in 2020.

Acknowledgements - Family

My parents, HANS ERWIN und RUTH JAEGER, from early on taught me to respect people in all their diversity, regardless of their faith orientation. Even when we had little there was always enough money to buy an additional book.

During our mutual journeys my wife ELIANE JAEGER helped me to observe the sociocultural traits of Nubian women. Her background as a primary school teacher was of great benefit when Nubians were developing literacy material. She carefully read most of the manuscript of this thesis. Our daughter ESMERALDA JAEGER joined us in our travels to the Sudan and Egypt. On her first journey she was just four months of age. At the age of seven she gave her first presentation about the Sudan with the whole school listening attentively. She always waits impatiently for our next journey to Nubia.

1.3. Overview

Chapter 2 looks at the research participants and the environment they live in and actively shape. I have chosen or developed research methods that allow these participants to be subjects who are fully involved in the research. Some of the outputs confirm the dynamic attitudes these Nubians have taken.

Chapter 3 discusses definitions of 'proverb' and the roles proverbs perform in society, based on a variety of bibliographic sources. Related proverb collections, mainly from northeast Africa, are reviewed.

The point of departure for gathering Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs were two proverb collections, one by Ḥāmid Khabīr, an Andaandi-speaking farmer and grassroots scholar, twice published, and another by two unnamed

Egyptian Mattokki students, still unpublished and preserved by Maher Habbob, a Fadijja Nubian grassroots scholar who himself collects Fadijja proverbs.⁴⁰

My brief sketch of Nubian linguistics is based on dictionaries and grammars partly from colonial times. Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs are glossed, something other proverb collections lack. As a result, within the limits set by proverbs that can differ from day-to-day speech, Nubian linguistic studies can benefit.⁴¹

Chapter 4 presents and expands Ḥāmid Khabīr's and the Mattokki students' proverb collections and divides them into 31 semantic domains with a cultural introduction to each domain. They mirror an agricultural, pre-globalised life style, typical of the Nile Nubian valley, touching topics such as river, waterwheel, farm work, harvest, dates, domestic animals, other animals, kinship, hospitality, food, clothing, work, travel, references to God, and many more. Puns and word plays are added.

The proverbs' cultural backgrounds and meanings are explained using a wide variety of voices from rural and urban Nubians whom I met during my travels and whom, together with their contributions, I want to make visible as much as possible. Sources written by one Mattokki Nubian and by scholars of Nubia in German during the first half of the 20th century are made available to a wider English speaking audience.

Some Nubian lexemes within a proverb can only be understood with the help of a more detailed explanation than provided by a dictionary entry. In some instances it has been necessary to dig deeper into Nubian sociocultural traits and behaviour than in any former Nubian anthropological study known to me. This concerns traits such as the concepts of discretion and decency, *sutera*, communal work at a *feza*, shared *karaama* meals and the reconciliation process performed by the *ejjuwaad*. A variety of meanings is obtained from different speakers, covering historical and contemporary connotations.

Writing down proverbs and archiving them leads to some degree of standardisation. As strict normativity is not customary with proverbs, I add

⁴⁰ Cf. MAHER HABBOb 2014 and MAHER HABBOb 2022.

⁴¹ Cf. JAEGER 2014b, also KAMAL HUSSEIN and JAEGER 2022: 107.

variants from different speakers. On another note, Nubian proverbs may provide one source for Nubian literacy classes.

Chapter 5 interprets proverbs from different semantic domains from a comprehensive point of view, lacking in most other proverbial research.⁴² It opens up further glimpses into the diversity of Nubian lives, enables a discourse about Nubian ethical practices and moral agency, and the lessons a globalised world can learn from it. Proverbs about the season of *tuubar* or the month of *tuuba* are one example.

⁴² Cf. BOSMAN 2002: 357: “Although much has been done in terms of the collection of African proverbs (paremiographical research), far less has been done with regards to the paremiological interpretation of the collected proverbs.”

2. Research Participants, Environment, and Methods

The most significant aspects of this research are the two ethnicities Dongolawi and Mattokki in general and their members specifically, whom I⁴³ have been working with for more than two decades. I mainly speak of ‘research participants’, occasionally of ‘co-investigators’, rarely of ‘interlocutors’, to emphasise “their status of a subject who acts and interacts”.⁴⁴

On average among the research participants Nubian grassroots scholars are the ones with the most comprehensive knowledge of proverbs or the greatest willingness to actively pass them on. Most of them want to preserve the Nubian languages and “their heritage for its own sake and not for commercial gain”⁴⁵ thereby fulfilling a specific role within their community, described as “... revivalist intervention in the social fabric ... essentially in the service of group identity.”⁴⁶ They invite me to become part of their vision.⁴⁷ However, they (and thereby I myself) may be in constant danger of viewing the language status through the lens of our vision.

The research participants create an environment that encourages and facilitates field research, enabling ongoing data collection and fruitful

⁴³ I use ‘I’ and ‘me’ to explicitly position myself within the context I am working. Using a 3rd person pronoun or a more general ‘the researcher’ would pretend some kind of objectivity I cannot and will not achieve.

⁴⁴ BUNZL 2014: xix. While LAUREN (2022) when discussing the term ‘interlocutor’ acknowledges that it lacks “embodiment and participatory practise” (p. 49), he reaches the opposite conclusion: “I can’t offer a superior alternative to ‘interlocutor’”. (p. 57)

⁴⁵ ROWAN 2017: 180.

⁴⁶ EDWARDS 2010: 46.

⁴⁷ Cf. GILMORE 2016: 65; describing ‘Mawardi’, one of the protagonists of Mukhtar’s novel ‘Jibāl al-Kohl: Riwāya Men al-Nūba’: “One of Mawardi’s stated dreams is for the Nubian language to be revived, codified, and taught to all Egyptians so that everyone could learn about their shared history in this ancient language, ... The novel thus posits learning the Nubian language as both a means of reviving Nubian identity in the diaspora ...” Note that in this context ‘diaspora’ stands for Nubians who are still living in Egypt, yet outside of the area around Aswan and Kom Ombo.

analysis. They have shaped my research methods. However, I am also aware of certain restrictions in order not to put research participants at risk.

During colonial times many studies were published on Nubia. I originate from a former colonial country. Therefore, research methods linked to colonialism and postcolonialism are chosen carefully.

The long-term approach of my research is based on the voluntary participation of research participants, mutual responsibility, working in group settings, avoiding the emergence of hierarchies, and empowering the participants as promoted by Participatory Action Research. Nubians wanting to transfer their linguistic and cultural knowledge to other Nubians or to the West are supported. All these methods indicate my aim to show some kind of vulnerability toward the research participants. It provides a shared space shaped by inside researchers, other research participants, and outside researchers.⁴⁸

The output of the study aims to benefit all participants and also the Nubian community. Therefore, parallel to the collection and analysis of the proverbs, a Nubian computer font has been developed based on specifications set by some Nubians. Nubian teachers teach the Nubian script in literacy classes. By writing the proverbs in Nubian characters literate Nubians are enabled to read them.⁴⁹ Aspects of identity that influence this study complete the introduction.

⁴⁸ 'Insider and outsider' is a binary distinction and leaves out the grey areas, as Dongolawi who left their homeland three or four generations ago and feel they belong more to a Sudanese or even Sudanese Arab than to a Dongolawi identity. Therefore, I understand 'insider and outsider' as representing a range with shades in-between.

I speak of 'outside researcher' and not 'foreign researcher' as I include any non-Nubian Egyptian or non-Nubian Sudanese researcher.

⁴⁹ Most probably JAEGER (2006b) is the first publication by a western scholar where contemporary Nubian language data are written in Nubian characters.

2.1. Research Environment

“[T]he research environment in [the] Sudan has generally been a welcoming one”.⁵⁰ Hospitality is easily offered in a generous way. With relationships becoming stronger, mainly in the Sudan I, together with my family who accompany me on most of my travels, increasingly stay with Nubian families, or in accommodation chosen by Nubians. Nubian children and my daughter enjoy playing with each other.⁵¹

Some Nubian associations and individual Nubians are active in literacy, language research and language development, more so since the 1990s.⁵² In fact, this already became visible as early as the early 1960s when Nijm al-Dīn and Muḥammad Sharīf, two men from Wadi Halfa, were looking into using the Old Nubian characters for writing Nubian.⁵³ A decade later there were

... three boys and two girls [from New Halfa] who occasionally write letters in [Nobiin] Nubian; and the two girls apparently read others’ Nubian letters, too, addressed to them.⁵⁴

When the Fadijja Mokhtar Khalil Kabbara (1952-1997) returned from his studies in Germany to Cairo around the mid-1990s, where he had developed a way of writing Nubian based on the Old Nubian characters, he taught interested Nubians the history of the Nubian script and his method of writing.⁵⁵ The Mattokki Mekki Muḥammad and the Dongolawi Fu’ād ‘Akūd

⁵⁰ FLUEHR-LOBBAN 2016: 33.

⁵¹ A very helpful paper about taking children to the anthropological field in the Sudan and Egypt is FLUEHR-LOBBAN and LOBBAN 1988.

⁵² As some Egyptian Nubian clubs in Cairo and Alexandria, and in the Sudan until the early 2010s the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’ and later the Nubian ‘Unyurti’ (‘knowledge’) association headed by Muḥammad Sharīf from Shebatood that additionally works in medical aspects. – When speaking English Nubians use the term ‘association’, not ‘organisation’.

⁵³ Herman Bell 2014, p.c. Similar thoughts may have happened among Dongolawi that have remained unnoticed.

⁵⁴ JERNUDD 1979: 109 about the Halfawi.

⁵⁵ Applied in MOKHTAR KHALIL 1990. – I speak of Old Nubian script and characters when talking about the writing of medieval Nubian, of Nubian script and characters when talking about the writing of contemporary Nubian that slightly differs.

frequently mentioned in this thesis were two of his students. When Mokhtar Khalil Kabbara passed away his students continued his work and soon published the first Nubian primer, still under his name.⁵⁶ In Alexandria the Mattokki Maḥjūb Mīrghani was paving the way for teaching Mattokki, developing his own material. He became my first Mattokki teacher.

A few Mattokki women joined these efforts, as Zīzī Şiyām from Tingaar. In 2012 she conducted a literacy class with teaching material found on the internet and adapted to fit her purposes.⁵⁷

Early in my research in the Sudan in 1999, associations among the Dongolawi with capacity for building sustainable language development were mostly non-existent. That changed with the founding of the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’ in the early 2000s. It held Andaandi literacy classes. In 2004 thirty Dongolawi Nubians (among them three women) on Aartigaasha Island were reported to be able to use the Nubian script.⁵⁸

Later, from about 2008 onward Andaandi literacy courses using the Nubian script were taught on the internet on different web sites belonging to Dongolawi villages, thereby not being restricted to Dongolawi living in one geographic location. They were supervised by El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Maḥmūd Sāti, ‘Abd al-Athīm Jamīl, and others. The experiences from these online courses and an Andaandi Primer Workshop held at the University of Cologne in 2009 became the basis for an Andaandi Students’ book, an Andaandi Teachers’ guide and an Andaandi Pictorial dictionary, all completely funded by Dongolawi businessmen.⁵⁹

While “Writing ... is the prestige modus of language”,⁶⁰ all these Nubian activities provided an environment in which my research could be embedded. Nowadays, the Linguistics Department of the University of Khartoum is most

⁵⁶ Mekki Muḥammad 2016, p.c. – MOKHTAR KHALIL 1999.

⁵⁷ Zīzī Şiyām 2012, p.c.; and own observation. Some of the Nubian characters were shaped differently, as Nubian **M** looked like two Mercedes stars next to each other.

⁵⁸ Farid Mekkawi 2004, p.c. He is the author of FARID M. A. MEKKAWI (2006).

⁵⁹ EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2012a-c. In section 2.4.3 I will return to these literacy activities.

⁶⁰ BLOMMAERT 2004a: 645.

helpful in supporting anybody doing fieldwork in Sudanese languages, and hosting workshops on Nubian topics.

Among Nubian research participants there is a great desire to be informed about Nubian studies conducted elsewhere. Linguistic research is gratefully acknowledged.

As most research participants were male, I mainly employ the male pronoun except when referring to a specific female interlocutor. I accept the limitations of information given by predominantly male research participants and leaving “indigenous female belief” partly unrecorded.⁶¹ Still, the number of female names, eight of Andaandi, sixteen of Mattokki background, show that in at least some Muslim communities research across gender boundaries is possible. Trust has been increasing steadily and my wife’s involvement since 2008 enabled more Andaandi- and Mattokki-speaking women to share their insights into Nubian sociocultural traits and proverbs. Also the German anthropologist Armgard Goo-Grauer connected me with some Mattokki women. Opportunities to investigate Nubian languages and proverbs across gender boundaries in particular are discussed in JAEGER (2018).

The geographical area where Nubians live and where this research has been completed is considered polycentric. More Nubians reside in Sudanese and Egyptian cities where they find work than in the Dongola Reach and the Aswan/Kom Ombo region. It could also be discussed how much the resettlement villages near Kom Ombo are to be considered as a homeland.

Any area outside the Sudan and Egypt where a community of transnational Nubians lives and feels closely related to Nubian communities in their homelands, especially on the Arabian Peninsula, Western Europe and North America, is signified as ‘Nubian diaspora’.⁶² These Nubians stay in close contact with other family members in the diaspora and in their homelands, inviting them (visa permitting) or visiting them as frequently as possible, also

⁶¹ For further discussions of this topic see RANGER 1983: 258. At a few places I add insights from Sudanese women’s voices recorded in ISMAIL and MAKKI 1990 that are similar to what my wife and I heard in the Dongola Reach.

⁶² Cf. BRUBAKER’s 2005: 5-6. – An insightful report about Sudanese including Dongolawi Nubians living and working in North America is offered by ABUSHARAF 2002.

sending financial support. On the whole Nubians living in the Sudan and in Egypt, and transnational Nubians show substantial agreement in their answers.

Nowadays, most Nubians live in an environment that is mainly characterised by non-Nubian inhabitants. In the Dongola Reach one finds many Sudanese that claim Arab descent and refugees from the Nuba Mountains, some of whom work in the homes of Andaandi speakers. In Aswan and Kom Ombo one meets Egyptians of Arab descent and Copts. While I have related to all these non-Nubian groups, they only feature at the margin of this thesis.

One cause endangering the Nubian languages and making research challenging is the lack of support or even opposition of government agencies and religious authorities in the Sudan and Egypt:

This prescribed Sudanisation [with the teacher being its agent] as an attempt to use the powers of the state to combat un-Islamic customs and practices and weaken local cultural differences, was considerably successful ..., especially among young people and in those aspects of social life which could be monitored.⁶³

A recurring story told by Sudanese Nubians of my generation has been that when speaking Andaandi at school, “a key site of authority and determining what is good language” and “regimented by sociocultural ideologies of language”,⁶⁴ pupils were given a card to pass on, with the last one of the day holding the card being beaten.

The Egyptian government’s position is made obvious by rarely providing any kind of Nubian studies at any Egyptian University. In a bold move in a Master’s thesis at the American University of Cairo, the situation is described on the Egyptian side of the border:

⁶³ HESSE 2002: 375; in the German original: “Diese verordnete Sudanisierung [deren Agent der Lehrer ist] als Versuch, mit den Mitteln staatlicher Herrschaft unislamische Sitten und Bräuche zu bekämpfen und den kulturellen Partikularismus der Lokalgesellschaften zu schwächen, zeigte ... schon beachtliche Erfolge gerade bei der Jugend und im kontrollierbaren sozialen Raum.” – The government of the Sudan from August 2019 to October 2021 wanted to change this.

⁶⁴ DEL PERCIO, FLUBACHER, and DUCHÈNE 2016: 10.

Egyptian Government policy, which has made no effort to preserve or promote the Nubian language, has then accelerated this declining trend. It has left older generations as the sole guardians and advocates for Nubian. The effect is not unlike that of colonization on an indigenous people, and their language and customs.⁶⁵

Due to visiting Egypt more frequently than the Sudan, in their homelands I have listened more to Mattokki voices than to Andaandi ones. That was balanced in the Nubian diaspora, where I met more Andaandi than Mattokki speakers.

A further factor of the research environment is the relationship of the Arabic language and Islam that is part of daily life also in Nubia, as explained by a Sudanese scholar:

The fact that Islam was revealed to an Arab Prophet, and that it was spread by the Arabs, and that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, all these factors have made the Arab race the most prestigious race in the eyes of [Sudanese] Northerners and Arabic not only a prestigious language, but also divine.⁶⁶

This results in great difficulties for the outsider to hear Andaandi or Mattokki spoken in public. When an outsider is present in the private sphere of the home, it loses part of its privacy, shifting the conversation to Arabic, or even to English. Part of it is due to hospitality, as it is assumed that neither Andaandi nor Mattokki is understood, also due to a lack of intimacy.⁶⁷ The

⁶⁵ SYONARA TOMOUM. 2013: 93. Syonara Tomoum is a non-Nubian Egyptian. She shows great insight into contemporary Nubian language ecology. – The Afro-American JENNINGS 2009: 137 who did research in Egyptian Nubia writes similarly: “The [Egyptian] government’s avowed aim to assimilate the Nubians into Egyptian society as quickly as possible, [is] symbolised by this destruction of their homeland and the dispersal of their people, as well as by the official discouragement of the use of the Nubian language”

⁶⁶ AL-BAQIR AL-AFIF MUKHTAR 2004: 223.

⁶⁷ Cf. SYONARA TOMOUM 2013: 60-61: “... when speaking to intimate interlocutors, the majority of participants (70%) would opt for Nubian only. With interlocutors who are not intimate, half of the participants (50%) reported speaking only in Arabic.” – The Mattokki Aḥmad ‘Uthmān (2019) told me much the same.

switch to speaking in a dominant non-Nubian language is so ingrained that it is a challenge to uproot and give the Nubian speaker enough confidence. Therefore, and also as I am more fluent in Arabic than in Nubian, for the most part Arabic, the language of wider communication in the Sudan and Egypt, has been the language of conversation, sometimes English and rarely German, Andaandi or Mattokki.

Another significant aspect of the research environment in Nubia is the concept of *sutera*, even more so in the Dongola Reach than in Egyptian Lower Nubia. “Dongolawi are the people of *sutera*.”⁶⁸ *sutera* covers negative behaviour so that it remains unknown to the outside world. It originates from Modern Standard Arabic *satara* ‘to cover, veil; to hide, conceal’,⁶⁹ the Sudanese Colloquial Arabic term *sutra* means ‘decency’.⁷⁰ It is not specific to Nubia, it is found as far west as among the Wolof of Senegal where it is called ‘*sutura*’.⁷¹

One non-Nubian Egyptian who did fieldwork in Egyptian Nubia writes: “To take a case outside the community was considered a failure for the whole community.”⁷² One Sudanese Mahas Nubian goes further:

... the [first] Nubian rule ... excludes non-Nubians from the participation in, or the knowledge of some main aspects of their culture. This is maintained without causing any embarrassment to the non-Nubian intruders through the Nubian language and the Nubian women; these two being the main guardians of the Nubian culture.⁷³

⁶⁸ Muştafa Samiltood 2015, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; similarly Thourya Muḥammad 2017, p.c. Among Mattokki Nubians I did not encounter the term *sutera*, but the concept is present.

⁶⁹ WEHR 1980: 397.

⁷⁰ TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 192. An in-depth discussion of *sutera* and its relatedness to shame and honour, also to gender, is found in MILLS (2011: 2-3) where it is defined as “... discretion, modesty, privacy, protection and the happiness that the previous terms are said to ensure.” – Semantic domain 25 ‘Clothing’ exemplifies the concept of *sutera* by Nubian proverbs.

⁷¹ PFEIL (2020: 43-73) devotes a whole chapter to *sutura* in Senegal.

⁷² HUSSEIN FAHIM 1983: 19.

⁷³ ALI OSMAN MOHAMED SALIH 1987: 419.

If something shameful⁷⁴ is learnt about another person it is not passed on. Talking negatively and blaming each other is considered like a seed of weeds that is scattered and then grows bigger than the bad deed itself. *sutera* avoids exposing social conflict and thus increasing divisions and infighting within a family or community. It smooths the path for finding an honourable solution and reconciling two warring parties.

Such concealment makes it extremely difficult for an outsider to discover and understand some deeper levels of Nubian identity, culture and society. There was reluctance to say proverb A30.4 in my presence, as nowadays many Sudanese regard themselves as one people, not as separate ethnicities.

In order to overcome this exclusion to some extent I include as much information as possible about the sociocultural background of the proverbs I am analysing, mainly from different Nubian voices. At the end of subchapter 5.6 ‘Negative Behaviour’, I list some further observations in this regard.

In some cases, being a German citizen has been beneficial. Until recently many outsiders doing scholarly work in Nubia were of German or Austrian origin, publishing in German,⁷⁵ studies that are easily omitted by researchers without knowledge of German. The German hospital in Aswan, founded at the beginning of the 20th century in particular for the Nubian population and called by local people, Nubians as well as non-Nubians, *al-Germaniya*, is much valued. Nowadays, all the medical doctors and nearly all the nurses working in the German hospital are Egyptians.

Therefore, the general experience of doing fieldwork in Nubia in relation to human interaction has been a pleasant one, in spite of the political situation.

⁷⁴ There is no Nubian lexeme expressing ‘shame’, only Arabic: *ʿib*. Among Nubians, the Arabic term *ʿib* is stronger than among Arabs. (Abdel Wahab 2014, p.c.).

⁷⁵ SCHÄFER 1917, JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921, JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1932, MASSENBACH 1933, SCHÄFER 1935, MASSENBACH 1962.

2.2. Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects

Like many other scholars from the West,⁷⁶ I present Nubian culture mainly in English. Also, most of the written sources referenced in this thesis originated in countries of (former) colonial power. Some were edited or published either by authors benefiting from colonial powers, or by Nubians living under colonial authority. That includes more than 20 articles published during the first and second decade of the 20th century, plus the works by Charles H. Armbruster, collected at the same time but not published till the 1960s. Further articles were published between 1920 and 1949.

Until the 1950s, both the Sudan and Egypt were part of the British Empire. Although officially the Sudan was jointly ruled by Egypt and the British, ultimately the British determined the politics of the Sudan.⁷⁷ The Egyptian king allied with the British was of Albanian descent. Therefore, the inclusion of colonial sources requires critical consideration.

I remember four events where I came in contact with Nubian voices critical about Western contributions to Nubian studies, all in the year 2018:

- When sitting in public transport from Kom Ombo to the resettlement villages with mainly *Şa'īdi* (non-Nubian Southern Egyptian) passengers, one Mattokki explained to the other passengers that Westerners never had done anything beneficial on behalf of the Nubians.
- A Mahas Nubian living in the US and considering himself being close to postcolonial⁷⁸ studies created a table of Nobiin phonemes. Asked about WERNER's (1987: 33+45) table of Nobiin phonemes, he said that he would not use any linguistic material developed by non-Nubians.
- After a presentation of my research at the Sudanese community of Edmonton (Canada) one Nubian pointed out the importance of the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop's work. Referring to the geographical

⁷⁶ The terminology 'West' and 'Westerner' is used to denote anybody with a West European or North American background or enculturated in Western Europe or Northern America, as in MARANZ 2001: 12.

⁷⁷ COLLINS 2008: 33-68.

⁷⁸ He himself used that term.

region of Nubia he argued for an African origin of civilisation and contrasted it to many western-centric archaeological works.

- At the 14th International Conference for Nubian Studies in Paris, one Sudanese of Arab background living in Texas presented a paper: “A Call for avoiding using the Adjective “Nubian” to designate Cultures and Inhabitants of Nubia during the Period BC - 550 AD”.⁷⁹ At the beginning he told the westerners in the audience, most of them archaeologists “You did a good job, now we [the Sudanese community] take over.” When one western scholar who actively promotes Nubian grassroots scholars pointed out some weaknesses, the speaker answered: “If you do not like it you are not welcome in the Sudan.” That created quite a stir among Nubians attending the session and posting the discussion on social media, concluding that the speaker was an ally of the then Sudanese government.

A couple of times I had to ensure that I was not being pushed into a colonial role by some Sudanese, as in one incident while working with Ḥāmīd Khabīr.⁸⁰ When discussing the event with Ḥāmīd Khabīr afterwards he voice the opinion that since the British colonial period many Sudanese regard foreigners as having more knowledge and favour them in such matters. That is also expressed by RAEWYN CONNELL:

... colonialism was not just an economic and political structure, but was also a cultural and psychological one.⁸¹

and DAVID SMITH:

The narrative of modernization ... has resulted in the marginalization and denigration of the native people of the southern continents [e.g. Africa and Latin America]. Where such peoples have survived, their

⁷⁹ The paper was to be presented by Samia Dafa’alla from the University of Khartoum. As she could not attend, somebody else stepped in. The two quotes did not seem part of the original paper.

⁸⁰ For more details about our working relationship and Ḥāmīd Khabīr’s insights into Nubian culture and language, see subchapter 3.6. At the time of this incident he already had presented a paper and had been invited to speak on Sudanese TV about Nubian culture and language.

⁸¹ CONNELL 2007: 183.

voices have gone unheard amid the trumpeting of ‘progress’ ... Tragically, this narrative has all too often become internalized ..., with the result that they have experienced terrible crises of identity and have frequently ended up demoralized.⁸²

I grew up on a council estate and neither of my parents studied at university. However, I am still advantaged. I am able to travel and enter most countries more easily than most Nubians. Therefore, I want to ensure that this position of privilege is not unnecessarily enhanced during the process of my studies, leading to negative consequences for Nubians, many of whom are additionally affected by leaving their homelands and urbanisation.

I will look critically at some of the foundational works for Nubian studies published during colonial times that influenced my linguistic and cultural analysis of the Nubian wisdom sayings and proverbs, while also bearing in mind that most postcolonial research, including this thesis, is written in a colonial language and therefore in need “of a larger intellectual framework than postcoloniality” as provided by “African indigenous languages”.⁸³ I acknowledge that by writing this thesis in English I may

- cause some Nubian traits to be made invisible, or
- present Nubian traits in a way that makes sense to a person with enlightenment background, or
- give the impression that Nubia could be understood from a European perspective, or
- give the impression that English and Nubian are languages that could be interchanged, or
- deem “only discourse that closely imitates Western equivalents in English ... acceptable.”⁸⁴

In order to balance this, in this thesis I refer to works written in five languages: English, German, Arabic, Andaandi and Mattokki Nubian, in some degree

⁸² SMITH 2011: 89.

⁸³ KWAME BEDIAKO 2008: 115-116. While Kwame Bediako is stating this mainly in relation to theology, it is also valid in other areas of epistemology.

⁸⁴ HARRIES 2022.

offering linguistic hospitality and diversity.⁸⁵ By writing in English, I have had to leave the safety of my own native language,⁸⁶ with quite a number of younger transnational Nubians living in the UK, the US and Australia, speaking English better than myself.

2.2.1. Colonial Linguistic Works

In the early 20th century FRANCIS L. GRIFFITH (1862-1934) published archaeological findings about the written Old Nubian language with its own script based on Greek, Coptic and Meroitic characters.⁸⁷ Being British, Griffith enjoyed the privilege of being a citizen of a colonial power while working in Egypt. He made the Old Nubian language a European “object of knowledge”.⁸⁸ About 80 years after the discovery of the Old Nubian script Nubians interested in their language and history retrieved it and made it part of their own history. Since then the Nubian script has been employed for literacy purposes.

CHARLES H. ARMBRUSTER (1874-1957) was a British colonial administrator in Dongola between 1901 and 1910. When writing up his language data during the Spanish Civil War in a ‘Dongolese Nubian ... Grammar’ and a ‘Dongolese Nubian ... Lexicon’ he described his approach:

During my years in Dóngola Lord Kitchener’s order that ‘Inspectors will have no offices’ still held good, so that I spent my time in travelling about the country; this gave me ample opportunities of

⁸⁵ Cf. the critique of scholars “celebrating linguistic diversity” yet only taking note of publications in English, as written in MITCHELL and STORCH (2022: 227).

⁸⁶ Cf. STORCH 2019: 17: “... we need the safety of our own language (which is there, we claim) in order to be able to describe the other language.”

⁸⁷ GRIFFITH 1909 and GRIFFITH 1913. – Meroitic is an extinct language of the Meroitic kingdom, written until the fall of its capital Meroe in the mid-4th century. (RILLY 2010)

⁸⁸ ERRINGTON 2008: 3. To maintain balance it needs to be kept in mind “that power tended to corrupt, but ... without power it was impossible to do any good”. (SANNEH 2008 based on Lesslie Newbiggin)

observing native life and acquiring Nubian, in which I learned in course of time to converse with a certain ease.⁸⁹

Being aware that isolated word-to-word translations are often not sufficient to express the meaning of given words and do not justify the complexities of a language, Armbruster lists many Andaandi example sentences, resulting in a lexicon of 269 pages in small print. The designation ‘lexicon’ is fully justified. However, no Nubian co-worker is mentioned, only other colonial administrators of his time. Instead, he is convinced of his own language abilities:

... in course of time one gradually accumulates a record of what is generally current and may fairly be termed normal, of what variations are common and what less so.⁹⁰

Due to World War II Armbruster’s Andaandi grammar was only published in 1960, the Andaandi lexicon in 1965. In 2010 the lexicon was reprinted. His works being printed fifty years later and the lexicon even reprinted, either indicate the quality of his research, or show that the colonial powers in the Sudan put more emphasis on non-dominant languages as compared to the independent state,⁹¹ or how much colonialism is still present in academia. When checking his language data with contemporary Andaandi speakers, we are astonished by the accuracy in both the grammar and the lexicon.

GERTRUD VON MASSENBACH (1883-1975) who was connected with the German hospital in Aswan, is known for her competency in Mattokki Nubian. Being German, she experienced expulsion from Egypt twice, 1914 to 1924 and 1939 to 1952, which indicates that the British colonisers in Egypt did not sense any political advantages in her language research. While standing at the turn from colonial to postcolonial Egypt, the anthropologist Rolf Herzog, in

⁸⁹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: ix.

⁹⁰ ARMBRUSTER 1960: ix. One wonders if Armbruster regarded himself as much an Andaandi language expert as any native speaker of Andaandi.

⁹¹ One old Dongolawi man told his son that language policy toward Sudanese non-dominant languages had become more discriminatory with Sudanese governments after colonial times (2021, p.c.).

his comprehensive description of pre-*hijra* Nubian culture from a western perspective, writes:

We consider the publications of Fräulein von Massenbach to be of particular importance, not only because of the length of time she spent in Nubia which places her way ahead of all other authors, but because she has had access to the sphere of women ...⁹²

In her Mattokki dictionary MASSENBACH (1933: 103) mentions her language co-worker Samuel Ali Hissein by name and other unnamed Nubians from “Koštamne” and the Aswan area, indicating that she included different speech varieties.

Two Mattokki Nubians have also written extensively about Nubian linguistics, one from the colonial, and one from the postcolonial period:

The first one is SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN⁹³ (1863-1927) from the Mattokki village of Abuhoor. After growing up in Nubia, Edfu and Northern Egyptian cities, he was invited by the Swiss film pioneer François-Henri Lavanchy to attend school in French-speaking Switzerland where besides receiving a western education, he began trusting in Jesus Christ. After his return to Egypt he remained true to his faith, also when living as the only Christian in his home village Abuhoor. Later he worked at the Aswan Post Office and then at the German hospital in Aswan. During that time he translated the gospels into

⁹² HERZOG 1957a: 20. In the German original: “Den Publikationen von Fräulein von Massenbach messen wir besonderes Gewicht bei, nicht nur weil sie nach der Dauer des Aufenthalts in Nubien weit an der Spitze aller Autoren steht, sondern weil sie Zugang zum Reich der Frau hatte, ...”

⁹³ There are different spellings of the name in Roman characters. SCHÄFER 1912a in his introduction to the Mattokki Nubian gospels writes “Samuel Ali Hisên”. SCHÄFER 1935 writes “Samuël Alī Hisên”. MASSENBACH 1933 quotes from “Samuel Ali Hisein”, yet writes “Samuêl” (with no father’s name) at other places. The Journal Sudan=Pionier marks his articles by “Samuel Ali Hissein”. As I frequently quote from this journal and in order to be consistent I use the last spelling throughout the thesis.

Mattokki,⁹⁴ wrote a Nubian primer,⁹⁵ and jointly, with the German professors Heinrich Schäfer and Hermann Junker, collected Mattokki stories and children's games,⁹⁶ all written in Roman script. He wrote an autobiography, the first part before World War I, the second part in Mattokki shortly before his death, alas still unpublished, also in Roman script.⁹⁷

I am not aware whether Samuel Ali Hissein did not hear about the Old Nubian script or whether the Europeans he worked with preferred the Roman script. Due to the fear of the British administrators that any conversion experience of a Muslim may cause unrest within the Muslim community nothing indicates any interest by the colonial powers in his work.

Samuel Ali Hissein was not only the first contemporary Mattokki to write Nubian, no other Nubian after him has produced such an amount of texts in a Nubian language. The accuracy of his observations is confirmed.⁹⁸ His faith, writings and translations partly conflict with the Muslim mind of the Nubian community in spite of Islam viewing the gospel (*injīl*) as a holy book. Therefore his person and writings, including non-religious ones, have been treated with utmost care. Only recently some Mattokki have begun to open up and show interest in discussing the life and work of Samuel Ali Hissein. It is argued that his works should not be judged by his religious beliefs. Some Nubians would like to study his works, hampered by the fact that many of his writings are published in German and unpublished manuscripts are kept in Germany.

While I will cite the publications by Samuel Ali Hissein frequently, I wonder how much of the Nubian mindset has been lost in the process of transporting

⁹⁴ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1912a; SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1912b; SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1912c; SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1912d. Also available at www.bible.com/bible/2610/MAT.1.XNZ1912 and following pages [last accessed on 24 February 2022].

⁹⁵ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1913.

⁹⁶ SCHÄFER 1917; JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921; and SCHÄFER 1935.

⁹⁷ A type-written manuscript is available. It consists of 86 pages. In the bibliography I list the second part in Mattokki as SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1927. There are further biographies, one in LAUCHE 2015: 163-273.

⁹⁸ As by El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2010, p.c.

one's own thoughts into German or English, or where the author even felt compelled to adapt Nubian traits to a western understanding.⁹⁹

2.2.2. Colonial Anthropological works

In the early 20th century Nubian cultural material and language data were collected by the German/Austrian Egyptologists HEINRICH SCHÄFER (1868-1957) and HERMANN JUNKER (1877-1962),¹⁰⁰ with Samuel Ali Hissein being their main research participant. SCHÄFER (1917) includes a five-page long biography,¹⁰¹ in SCHÄFER (1935) the name is part of the title: "Texte im Kunuzi-Dialekt (Mundart von Abuhor) von Samuël Alī Hisēn". Both were interested in Samuel Ali Hissein as a person and stayed in regular contact by mail while absent from Egypt.¹⁰² They also invited him for an extended period to Berlin.

In this thesis I also quote from Samuel Ali Hissein's articles in the *Sudan=Pionier* (SP) published since 1900 by the Sudan=Pionier Mission, to which he regularly contributed. His writings demonstrate an intimate style, one can feel how he connects with the audience. Fifteen years after his death, Margarete Unruh, the director of the SPM, described Samuel Ali Hissein as the "most valuable co-worker" of the "small, newly started mission work".¹⁰³ With the exceptions of SAMIR BOULOS' (2015) and GERALD LAUCHE's (2015) PhD theses, thus far I have not seen any academic publication quoting from the mission magazine *Sudan=Pionier*. While Boulos looks very critically at the material and its background, Lauche does not state explicitly which works are taken from the SP, and there is also no specific bibliography mentioning issues and pages. Both treat the texts in the SP as reliable sources.

⁹⁹ Cf. HARRIES 2022.

¹⁰⁰ SCHÄFER 1917; JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921; JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1932; and SCHÄFER 1935.

¹⁰¹ SCHÄFER 1917: 32-37.

¹⁰² Some of the communication is published in SCHÄFER 1917: 238-267.

¹⁰³ UNRUH 1942: 10. While the book was published in Switzerland, Margarete Unruh was living in Germany. Describing an African in these terms during the Nazi regime, was a bold move. In the German original: "Damit [mit Samuel Ali Hissen] bekam die kleine, neubegonnene Missionsarbeit ihren wertvollsten Mitarbeiter."

I will deal similarly with Samuel Ali Hissein's articles in the SP, except when some obvious reason speaks against it, such as his positive bias toward his home village Abuhoor.¹⁰⁴

The *Sudan=Pionier* was meant for the mostly non-academic supporters of the medical work at the German hospital *al-Germaniya* in Aswan. European workers of the SPM associated with the hospital in Aswan were encouraged to learn a Nubian language, and many of them did so, like the medical doctor Elisabeth Herzfeld (1890-1966)¹⁰⁵ and the nurse Marianne Bühler (1906-1978),¹⁰⁶ practising “communicative interaction”¹⁰⁷ with their Nubian patients and thereby being advantaged in understanding culture and society compared with some researchers who neglected non-dominant languages.¹⁰⁸

Like any other magazine published by an NGO, the *Sudan=Pionier* could only with difficulty talk about the negative aspects of the work of the SPM, as it would have disappointed the donors.

I read the issues of the *Sudan=Pionier* from 1900 up to the end of World War I.¹⁰⁹ The triumphalism that characterises some other mission publications is mainly absent. The authors of some articles, among them medical doctors and researchers of African Studies, aimed to understand their Nubian patients' culture in order to better serve them. Additionally, some academics wrote for a mainly non-academic audience, an art frequently neglected.

¹⁰⁴ As in SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1900: 13: The inhabitants here [in Abuhoor] are also more civilised than in most other [Nubian] districts. – In the German original: “Auch sind die Bewohner hier [in Abuhoor] zivilisierter, als in den meisten anderen [nubischen] Distrikten.“

¹⁰⁵ HÖPFNER 1966: 2; A. Goo-Grauer 2022, p.c. Elisabeth Herzfeld worked in Aswan and Lower Nubia from 1926 until 1966, with a break during World War II.

¹⁰⁶ HERZFELD 1966a: 23; S. Rahmani 2022, p.c. Marianne Bühler worked in Aswan and Lower Nubia from 1935 until 1966, with a break during World War II.

¹⁰⁷ FABIAN 2014: 148.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. FABIAN 2014: 32: “almost all the “classical” ethnographers failed to meet one basic condition: command of the language of the peoples they studied.” One example is ROLF HERZOG, first professor of African Studies at Freiburg University (1965-1987), who did not speak any Nubian language and worked with an Arabic translator during his field research in Nubia.

¹⁰⁹ The magazine was published until 1928, then its name was changed.

Members of the SPM and its successor EMO did not hide the Nubian feelings toward dam buildings and the *hijra* and made them visible. They even did not conceal their own personal grief about what was happening.¹¹⁰

Colonial anthropology has been in danger of transitioning into “absentee colonialism.”¹¹¹ In contrast, the anthropologist ARMGARD GOO-GRAUER who began her research shortly after the colonial period, stayed in close contact to some Nubians and actively looked for opportunities to enable Nubian participation at international conferences. When observing that hardly any Nubians had been invited to a UNESCO conference at the Aswan Museum in 2009, she intervened. Nubians who participated at short notice used that opportunity to present a Nubian perspective to the international audience.

2.2.3. Nubian Epistemologies and Methodologies

Some Nubians remember wisdom from their ancestors whose origin is sometimes difficult to explain for a Westerner.¹¹² I gained further knowledge from publications or conference talks by Nubians. That is reflected in the bibliography that includes more than 50 books, booklets and papers written by Nubian authors.¹¹³ As many of their names sound Arabic they may easily be overlooked.¹¹⁴ Prominent among them is AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ, born in 1958, after the end of British colonial rule in Egypt, a Mattokki speaker from the village of Dehemiit. In 1988 he wrote his PhD about the grammar of Mattokki at the State University of New York. When returning to Egypt and becoming a professor first at Qena University and then at Aswan

¹¹⁰ Cf. HERZFELD 1966c. Also SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1909, quoted in semantic domain 1 ‘River’.

¹¹¹ FABIAN 2014: 69.

¹¹² Fifty years ago, a Nubian mother said: There will come a time when iron can talk. When looking at the telephone and the TV, it has come true. (Şabri Aḥmad 2023, p.c.; talking about the knowledge of former generations)

¹¹³ Additionally there are some works by non-Nubian Sudanese authors.

¹¹⁴ As in the review of the famous novel ‘Season of Migration to the North’ written by MAKDISI 1995. The novel’s Nubian author Tayeb Salih is constantly referred to as an Arab author, his Nubian background is omitted.

University he did not leave his native village, unlike most other scholars from the Sudan and Egypt. Being a native speaker he mentions his “wife (Mona) for serving as an informant”.¹¹⁵ He has continued publishing in Egyptian journals related to English language departments.¹¹⁶

Some of these **publications** went through a process of editing by western scholars. Such a western initiated process enables some Nubians to publish in places appreciated by western scholars and thus increases the flow of knowledge from the Global South¹¹⁷ to the West, hopefully in the long term also leading to African publications where scholars from the West will contribute. Around 2010 tech-savvy Nubians put a conversation between a Nubian poet and myself on YouTube.¹¹⁸ In 2012 CASAS, ‘The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society’ based in South Africa published the proceedings of a conference under the title ‘Unity and Diversity of Nubian Languages’ held at the University of Khartoum where most presenters came from an African or even a Nubian background.¹¹⁹

At **academic conferences** numbers of Nubian scholars are limited due to visa restrictions and limitations of scholarships.

The Mattokki Muḥammad Ṣubḥi recently began to apply **oral storytelling** to keep the knowledge about Nubian proverbs alive. He takes proverbs that are already familiar from the songs of the late Mattokki artist Ṣidqī Aḥmad Silīm and creates a story from it. In that process he adapts the ancient Nubian art of

¹¹⁵ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: iv.

¹¹⁶ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1989; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1995; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1997; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 2007.

¹¹⁷ The term ‘Global South’ may imply a binary distinction between the North/West and the South, so typical of Western perception, yet overlooking some nuances that would help in better understanding dynamics in the South. There is diversity in the ‘Global South’, for there is indeed more than one. There is a South within the South (as Southern Egypt and Southern Sudan), and a West within the West (as Western Germany). Still I prefer that term to others such as ‘developing countries’.

¹¹⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYhk8bnvnKw [last accessed on 26 November 2020]

¹¹⁹ Cf. EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and JAEGER 2012; JAEGER and KAMAL HUSSEIN 2012.

storytelling to a new situation.¹²⁰ Through modern means of communication Nubian epistemologies are shared, heard and promoted.

‘Southern Theory’ is not just about producing theory in the Global South and transferring it to the West, but also about people from the Global South exchanging their theories with other Southerners.¹²¹ Once when visiting the General Nubian Club in Cairo early in my research, Nubians present in the club talked about some guests from Mali with whom they had discovered parallels between their languages. In a similar vein one Mattokki man from West Aswan told me about a dream he had where he had seen a man from Mali who had spoken a language similar to his.¹²²

One example of the outworking of Southern Theory, before the term Southern Theory was coined, is the research done by anthropologist ANNE JENNINGS who due to her Afro-American ancestry blended more easily with “The Nubian Women of West Aswan”:

The Nubian villagers ... tend to be rather secretive about their behavior. However, they felt more inclined to trust me, they said, because we were of common ancestry.¹²³

She lived with a Mattokki family for an extended period. After her departure she continued her relationships whenever the possibility turned up for a return

¹²⁰ Some of the proverbs and their relation with Şidqi Aḥmad will be introduced in subchapter 3.4. Some Mattokki proverbs (as M5.3 variant) are introduced in “He who grows barley does not harvest wheat” www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CMa1lcUQ_c. Muḥammad Şubḥi tells oral stories in “The story of Dahab and the crocodile” and “The story of the ugly man and the beautiful girl”. www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEkWmoq-vHs and www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIktFaL1Cu8. [all last accessed on 26 November 2020].

For Andaandi stories: MASSENBAACH 1962: 104-108 + 145-166; for Mattokki stories: MASSENBAACH 1931 and MASSENBAACH 1962: 1-75.

¹²¹ CONNELL 2007.

¹²² Mattokki man 2001, p.c. In Mali there are also Nilo-Saharan languages spoken.

¹²³ JENNINGS 2009: 13. Jennings discusses her Afro-American origin and its effect on her research on pages 11-14. Cf. also the principle of *sutera*.

visit. During her stay in West Aswan she experienced **informal information sharing** while “talking with friends in groups”.¹²⁴

All that fits into the research methods I apply while working alongside Nubian research participants. In the following subchapter I will sketch them, adding how I put checks and balances on my own power in order not to repeat colonial pitfalls, and how Nubian epistemologies are made visible and available in the West.

2.3. Research Methods

During the duration of my research members of both ethnicities, Dongolawi and Mattokki, have proved to be active agents willing to take on responsibility, some of them even researching proverbs themselves and passing on their insights. That has enabled the creation of a shared space, shaped by researchers from the inside, grassroots scholars, other Nubians actively participating in other ways such as hospitality, including myself.¹²⁵ Here, the first and second groups together are referred to as ‘research participants’. The outside researcher is not only observing and participating in this process, but also frequently involved in “communicative interaction”¹²⁶ with the first and second group enabling partnership in research.

A researcher’s primary responsibility is toward the research participants. In subchapter 2.1 I described some of the obstacles that may cause difficulties in fieldwork in Nubia and mentioned negative consequences that could befall research participants. In subchapter 2.2 I looked at possible pitfalls when using studies based on colonial concepts. I ask myself: What is the impact of my approach on the daily life of Nubian research participants, now and in future, and on future researchers in Nubia? That leads to the question:

¹²⁴ JENNINGS 2009: 106.

¹²⁵ BOURKE (2014: 1) helped to understand my part as an outsider within the ‘shared space’ that my research created.

¹²⁶ FABIAN (2014: 67+71) critiques Levi-Strauss’ approach to anthropology, where the outside researcher stays distant from the objects viewed. By contrast in this thesis, my observations among Nubians frequently include a component of non-distant “communicative interaction” or “communicative praxis”.

How can a meaningful and balanced collaboration with African research participants take place when both the research plan and funding usually originate from the researcher's home country?¹²⁷

In this subchapter I describe some methods that allow myself and the reader to reflect upon and evaluate my approach to limiting such impediments. To begin with, the selection of research methods is not neutral, but filtered through western enlightenment thinking and my own experiences. Even if they have proven to be effective among Nubians in the Sudan, in Egypt and in the diaspora, in no way do I assume that they necessarily fit linguistic and anthropological studies in other ethnicities and lead to the same results.

2.3.1. Long-term Commitment

Frequent greeting and visiting mark the beginning and the continuation of a mutual journey with Nubians involved in this research. Cross-cultural relationships are established and the way of being accepted and later trusted is hopefully paved. I discover the level of understanding patterns of human interaction between the people I am involved with and myself. It is a process of trial and error. I have the feeling of entering a game where I am the only one not knowing the rules. However, also the research participant may want to discover the rules by which I am operating, my way of behaviour, intentions and motives. The longer I share in this game the more I observe and notice, and the more “the Other [has] *the time* to become part of the ethnographer’s past.”¹²⁸ These observations have been kept in my anthropological diary since 1999.

As among many other ethnicities in Africa there are outsiders and NGOs zooming in and out with a pre-defined task to be fulfilled during a specific time frame. While such an approach may appear more efficient in the short term, it easily contradicts the needs and desires of the community the

¹²⁷ STORCH 2002: 23-24; in the German original: “Wie kann sich eine sinnvolle und ausgeglichene Zusammenarbeit mit afrikanischen Gewährsleuten gestalten, wenn sowohl Forschungsplan als auch -mittel in der Regel dem Heimatland des Forschenden entstammen?”

¹²⁸ FABIAN 2014: 90.

researcher is working with and leads to restricted and even crooked results.¹²⁹ In contrast, in the Sudan a researcher who took the time, returned frequently and greeted the people she had worked with was named as a positive example. Thankfully I have not been required to complete within a given time frame. Instead, I could frequently concentrate on topics that the Nubian community wanted to discuss or study. Of course, while during most of my visits I had prepared an agenda, I felt free to shelve it whenever needed and prioritise my relationship with the speech community.¹³⁰

Allowing sufficient time for greetings and farewells needs a large enough time-budget:

I am thinking more about long-term commitments to people who have opened their minds, hearts, and homes to the fieldworker out of a basic spirit of decency and cooperation. In reality, these may be human responsibilities above and beyond the requirements of our science, I am sure that my view of the two Sudanese urban communities I was part of goes far deeper and stretches further than any statistics I have collected.¹³¹

A non-Nubian Egyptian member of a team doing anthropological fieldwork in Lower Nubia just before the *hijra* writes:

The informants tended to view a long-term study in their community as a reflection of a continuing interest on the part of the researcher in the village and its people. ... A long-term researcher is capable of

¹²⁹ Cf. BANKS 2001: 179: “Swooping goose-like into other people’s lives and gathering ‘data’ ...according to a predetermined theoretical agenda strikes me not simply as morally dubious but intellectually flawed.”

¹³⁰ As I am dealing with competent speakers, the term ‘speech community’ fits well, as in MORGAN 2004. A term of similar meaning is ‘language community’, as defined and discussed in CONNELL et al 2021: 247. Both terms include all speakers, including those living in the diaspora. The terms ‘ethnic community’ and ‘ethnicity’ define community members who still speak the community’s language and those who have experienced language shift.

¹³¹ FLUEHR-LOBBAN and LOBBAN 1986: 185. This part is written by Richard Lobban.

understanding the village's needs and problems in their sociocultural and historical context.¹³²

Jim Harries, working in Kenya, reaches a similar conclusion:

[A] great deal of many African ways of life is invisible, ... It has taken me 24 years of living on the African continent amongst African people to be able to see it as clearly as I do now.¹³³

During each visit or informal gathering I do not begin by collecting data or eliciting proverbs, but by chatting and showing deep interest in my counterpart's life and doings. One Mattokki told me how important it was for him to have some meaningful conversation first, so that afterwards he would be able to provide better explanations. He clearly wanted to understand my way of thinking. In the end it is "the researcher's time" and the research participant's time together that "affect the production of knowledge."¹³⁴

Once motives are understood and a trusting relationship has been established, it remains mainly stable and life-long. It can even be bequeathed to the research participants' children, thereby becoming multigenerational.

Of course, funds available may be limited:

In the longer term, as ethical documenters we must do a better job of convincing both academics and development funding agencies that linguistic fieldwork – unlike much of natural science research, to which these funding agencies are orientated – entails a long-term commitment to the communities ...¹³⁵

I would go further and argue that with the kind of long-term research where locals involved recognise some kind of benefit, as in language documentation, overall costs should decrease. This is especially true in the Sudan where so many grassroots scholars are eager to participate.

¹³² HUSSEIN FAHIM 2010: 100-101.

¹³³ HARRIES 2013: 16.

¹³⁴ FABIAN 2014: 107. He criticises that too frequently only the "the researcher's time" is taken into consideration.

¹³⁵ DWYER 2006: 59.

I have already introduced one example of a fruitful long-term working relationship between a Nubian and a western scholar: Samuel Ali Hissein and Heinrich Schäfer worked together from 1906 until the death of the former in 1927.¹³⁶

A long-term commitment to a group allows more time to learn their language:

The greatest compliment which can be paid to a language is to learn it.

The impact of outsiders learning a vernacular language can be tremendous.¹³⁷

Of course, with language shift in Nubian languages accelerating, one can easily get around Nubia without knowing a single Nubian word. As the contemporary researcher hears much more Arabic than Nubian spoken in most Nubian villages, it is also becoming more challenging to learn Nubian.¹³⁸ However, even the average Nubian who does not use a Nubian language any more shows greater respect to an outsider who speaks one of the Nubian languages.

2.3.2. Voluntariness

In the course of my studies, nearly all Nubians I have become acquainted with have been introduced to me by other Nubians, or in a few instances by other non-Nubian Sudanese or Egyptians interested in Nubia. I visit a Nubian village only by invitation, avoiding “cold calls”.¹³⁹ Each Nubian should be able to decide for himself whether he wants to meet me, or even further participate in Nubian linguistic and cultural research. Therefore, I depend on a community that welcomes my studies and myself. My behaviour needs to fit the local understanding of a person who complies with social-cultural rules.

During a typical visit to a Nubian home, I attempt to discover areas of common interest between my host and myself in language and culture

¹³⁶ LAUCHE 2015 describes their working relationship in more detail.

¹³⁷ MILLER 2000: 178.

¹³⁸ As did Gertrud von Massenbach, Armgard Goo-Grauer, and to a certain extent Christa Witkowski, alias CHRISTA LAILA MERYAM HATSHEBSUT 2011.

¹³⁹ Cf. DWYER 2006: 50.

research. On the whole I avoid steering the conversation, instead participating in whatever activity is going on, possibly not arriving at the topic I am most interested in. Any research participant may develop his own train of thought, resulting in a variety of lines of reflections. Of course, I benefit from working in the Sudan and in Egypt, where hosts desire their guests to have a pleasurable experience. So questions are happily answered or even invited, simplifying data collection. As I get to know a research participant more closely and become acquainted with his interests, I prepare some guided questions before visiting, rarely a formal interview or a questionnaire. My experience with this kind of open-endedness is comparable to that of the anthropologist Richard Lobban who worked for more than 40 years in the Sudan:

At times I would plan to meet my friends for some sort of interview, but then tea and cookies would be served around, other neighbors would arrive and chat about the day's events or world affairs, and the afternoon would pass until it was time for evening prayers.¹⁴⁰

Insiders may become involved emotionally. After working for one hour on an Andaandi story in 2009, a middle-aged Dongolawi said that language work greatly disturbed him, because it went right to the roots of his being. He felt as if a treasure was being taken away from him. Nevertheless, with his approval, we continued. Finally he commented that while doing language work things would brightening up for him.

Disclosing feelings enriches my studies and motivates me to continue. One Mattokki man plainly told me that he loves to talk about his own language. Another Mattokki man interested in Nubian culture and languages was described as spending all his spare time on Nubian. Is this related to the above average number of Nubian language advocates staying unmarried?

Such an approach based on the insider's voluntary action and not on immediate payment makes research lengthier and requires long-term

¹⁴⁰ FLUEHR-LOBBAN and LOBBAN 1986: 185. This part is written by Richard Lobban.

participation as discussed in the previous section.¹⁴¹ It does not necessarily fit a western understanding of achievement:

At this point some may argue that my approach was too passive and not sufficiently rigorous to be valid. I am the first to admit my frustration with gathering quantitative data in the field, but at the same time I do have an extremely high degree of confidence that my naturalistic approach easily compensated for what I might have lost in other areas.¹⁴²

Anne Storch, who worked in the Sudan for an extended period, writes:

Therefore, we may just sit there, in this liminal space, where language is cheap if not free. Talk, gossip, chat. Apocryphal yet making us human. Of course, this is what we do during our leisure time, this is not academic writing. And yet ...: isn't leisurely spent time very often the context in which [we] are most productive?¹⁴³

At the other end of the scale there are NGOs with a considerable amount of funds to spend and thereby easily finding employees. When the UN and UNESCO started showing a greater presence in Khartoum, Sudanese friends complained that rents increased. Yet only wealthy people could afford to rent out a flat to an NGO employee. That made locals wonder if, in the end, such NGOs will only benefit their own workers and wealthy people.¹⁴⁴

A more balanced approach by a Westerner who in general is privileged allows locals, especially less affluent ones, to be part of the decision-making process. In this case the insider is enabled to talk about his own interests and to come up with his own solutions. When some Nubians began developing Andaandi

¹⁴¹ Payment can influence results, as CARRIER (2011: 254) experienced when investigating differences between lexemes that were given to another researcher. There are other ways of passing on gifts and money, e.g. at the birth of a child, at a wedding, or when sending condolences.

¹⁴² FLUEHR-LOBBAN and LOBBAN 1986: 184. This part is written by Richard Lobban.

¹⁴³ STORCH 2019: 23.

¹⁴⁴ An old Halfawi lady and other Sudanese in Khartoum 2006, p.c. – The influence finances have had on Nubian society is discussed in semantic domain 23 'Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both'.

literacy material in the early 2010s, my wife and I were invited to present different methods. These Nubians themselves decided which recommendation to accept and which not. We might have done a few things differently, but in so doing it has remained their literacy project. Giving the research participant freedom to operate independently from an outside researcher reinforces the mutual relationship and responsibility, as discussed in the next section.

2.3.3. Mutual Responsibility

This research would not have happened without Nubian research participants willing to trust me. They share their knowledge and even many aspects of life without needing to be assured that I would represent both properly.¹⁴⁵ They have introduced me to other Nubians that they deemed could participate. Therefore, I heed the advice of a long-term researcher in Nubia:

... anthropologists ... are acknowledging a unique kind of responsibility toward those among whom we have lived.¹⁴⁶

Indeed, in this research the human element takes a prominent position. I meet Nubians in all kinds of situations, inside and outside Africa, sharing their pains, worries and joys, as much as it is possible for a non-Nubian. Many Nubians offer hospitality and care for my travels, making them as safe as possible.¹⁴⁷ As a result, Nubians of contemporary and future generations should get the opportunity to benefit from the research.

¹⁴⁵ I write ‘knowledge’ intentionally. I want to learn from the Nubians’ indigenous knowledge rather than getting ‘information’.

This trust is reciprocated: When in 2019 a Sudanese film team led by a Nubian did a report about our research they offered to send it to us before screening. Due to bad internet connections in the Sudan I waived their offer and told the director that I would trust his decisions. The result can be watched at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-DvyNe33bA [last accessed on 18 November 2020]

¹⁴⁶ JENNINGS 2009: 14. The same advice goes for linguists.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. GROHMANN (2020: 148) writing about living as a Westerner in South Africa, yet having a vulnerable and decolonial approach: “Instead of oneself being host and giving people who are financially less well off a ‘treat’, one can honour others by allowing them to serve one in their space.”

In particular, health issues, so prominent in Nubian life, are not an abstract issue, yet during physical visits I share with research participants and other Nubians times of difficulties, postponing my own goals in favour of being present. Understanding human beings and their sociocultural traits, and building trust are greatly enhanced when meeting at each other's low points.

The Nubian research participants assume responsibility for the knowledge they share. They are willing to look critically at knowledge given by other Nubians. There is a real desire to bring forth the best possible results. Many of them have confirmed explicitly that they want their names mentioned in public presentations, indicating their participation in the research and the pains they put into it. Therefore, information gained from mainly informal communicative interaction, or dialogue between the research participant and myself, is frequently marked by its source: a name frequently transliterated, the year and 'p.c.', meaning 'personal communication'. In a few instances it has seemed preferable to conceal the identity of an oral source. I do not assume that the average Nubian wants his name revealed for immediate personal benefit. Nubians cited in earlier publications are aware that citing a name does not lead to being invited to the West or being promoted.

My responsibility reaches into the future. Every now and then research participants wonder, based on their experiences with other outsiders, if after finishing my studies I will fail to remember them. Only the future will show if I will be able to meet such expectations and keep my promises.

2.3.4. Group Settings

During my travels in the Sudan and in Egypt from 1999 onward, and later beyond in the diaspora in the Arab Gulf (mainly Qatar), Western Europe and North America (both, the US and Canada), I have frequently become part of informal Nubian group settings. It offers a safe space, except when there is some prior animosity. There "one gains much and also different information in a casual chat, *al-wanasa*."¹⁴⁸ While this quote refers to Kordofan and

¹⁴⁸ HESSE 2002: 12; in the German original: "gewinnt man viele und auch andere Informationen im zwanglosen Plausch, *al-wanasa*." – Hesse's anthropological research included Nubians outside the Nile Valley in Northern Kordofan where there

Darfur, the same goes for the Nubians I met in Northern Sudan and in Egypt, as expressed by the Egyptian Shoukry Roweis about his travels through Egyptian Lower Nubia prior to the *hijra*: “There, I did *wanasa* and found data.”¹⁴⁹ In the words of an anthropologist working in pre-*hijra* Nubia:

... one of the best things in life is conversation and tea with one’s friends or close relatives in comfortable, secure surroundings.¹⁵⁰

I avoid the term ‘focus group’ as nearly each time in such group settings the composition of participants differed, also in a ‘focus group’ the researcher decides about attendance which I did not. In most instances I do not have and do not want such a position of influence. Of course, in some sense group settings have been homogenous, otherwise its members would not have met.

Typical Nubian group settings I have been part of took place in Egyptian Nubian teahouses and clubs,¹⁵¹ and at the Sajaana bus station in Khartoum, where buses from Dongola and further north arrived until about 2009, shortly after the opening of the paved road to the north.

Such a setting minimises the shame an individual Nubian would carry if saying something considered incorrect. My questions may be first discussed before the group’s consensus is presented. Sometimes, topics that were of little interest to me early in my research, due to my limited understanding of Nubian sociocultural traits, became valuable only later.

Still, not disturbing such a casual environment for the performance of proverbs and its discussion requires extra care. The amount or severity of change in ambience due to the researcher’s presence is determined by the tools in use. To maximise the research participants’ comfort, most of the time I use pen and paper for condensed note taking. “No notebooks, tape recorders

are many similarities to Nile-Nubian culture. *wanasa* is a Sudanese Colloquial Arabic expression, also known in Egypt.

¹⁴⁹ Shoukry Roweis (2019, p.c.) while presenting a keynote lecture at ‘The International Conference on Vernacular Architecture in Berlin’ in 2019 on ‘Dwelling and Dwellings in Twentieth-Century Lower Nubia: Ways of Re-seeing’.

¹⁵⁰ FERNEA and GERSTER 1973: 44. Cf. semantic domain 20 ‘Conversation’. Here I widen the scope of the analyses.

¹⁵¹ As described in POESCHKE 1996 and ROTH 1991.

while being with the Nubians.”¹⁵² Early in my research the son of a nearly monolingual Mattokki woman living in Alexandria brought a tape recorder along, so that I could tape his mother and her friends. But they felt insecure, resulting in a lot of giggling. In the end, I turned off the tape recorder and returned to the old-fashioned way of using pen and paper. That did the job. Also, on other occasions I only write down observations and interactions after group sessions have been concluded.

In the same way, questionnaires may decrease the comfort of the participants in a group setting, or elsewhere:

I rarely used a written questionnaire for individual interviews, preferring the richness of the social dynamics and points of view that emerged in group sessions.¹⁵³

Therefore, in this thesis knowledge produced and presented by Nubian counterparts in group settings is not rendered literally. Still, I aim to represent the research participants’ views as correctly as possible.

2.3.5. Hierarchy Avoidance

Some aspects of Nubian hierarchy are clearly visible. Honour is shown to elders, as expressed in some of the proverbs, giving society much needed stability. Already before British colonialism there were kings (*or*) in the Dongola Reach.¹⁵⁴ Still, Nubian society is less hierarchical than surrounding societies, as expressed by one Nubian, one Egyptian, and one Western voice, with long time involvement in Nubia:

[T]he general Nubian economic philosophy ... stressed socio-economic equilibrium in all Nubian communities.¹⁵⁵

Nubian society is not hierarchical in the sense that one leader can make a decision for a group – instead everyone must be persuaded through

¹⁵² Shoukry Roweis (2019, p.c.) during the aforementioned keynote lecture. – A worthwhile reading on the influence of research tools is MARTINEZ 2016.

¹⁵³ FLUEHR-LOBBAN and LOBBAN 1986: 187. This part is written by Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban.

¹⁵⁴ ENDERLIN 1920b: 21. The topic is taken up again in section 5.5.2.

¹⁵⁵ ALI OSMAN MOHAMED SALIH 1987: 426.

discussion. ... Nubians prefer to be self-governing, that is, not taking all issues to a higher authority. ... No one is entitled to give orders.¹⁵⁶

If I were to make a cross-section of the village population, it would seem right to characterize their attitude as democratic. Nubians denied that there were any class differences among them. ... In reality, there were layers, which were hard for outsiders to recognize.¹⁵⁷

Still nowadays, when attending a Nubian group setting where *wanasa* occurs I observe its members ensuring that everyone, whether old or young, rich or poor, participates and voices an opinion.

As for the social background of Nubians I work alongside, the majority of them have left their home villages and reside either in Sudanese or in Egyptian cities, or even further away, reflecting Nubians in general. They differ in formal education, financial status, and strictness of religious adherence. In the Sudan quite a few Dongolawi are even related to members of regional and national authorities.

The Nubian community I am working with differs in one aspect from the average Nubian. At the time of writing many of the research participants are above the age of 50 years. That starkly contrasts with a Sudanese and Egyptian demography of more than 50% of the population below the age of 25 years. The poet Maḥmūd Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rahīm, the language teachers ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr and Mekki Muḥammad, also Umm Ḥamdi, Muḥammad Gum‘a, ‘Umar Ḥasan, all Mattokki, the Dongolawi poet Farid Mekkawi, also Aḥmad Hamza and the Halfawi Abdel Halim Sabbar have already passed away. All of them possessed comprehensive knowledge of the diversity of their culture and language. I am not the only researcher who laments such a loss:

Many of my original informants did not survive the period of the study.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ HOPKINS and SOHAIR MEHENNA 2010: 49; writing about pre-*hijra* Nubia.

¹⁵⁷ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 2010: 205; writing about pre-*hijra* Nubia.

¹⁵⁸ DORIAN (1978: xvi) who did research on language shift in Gaelic speaking parts of Scotland.

Regarding education, among the Nubians mentioned in this thesis Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid (Dongolawi), Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz, Nāsir al-Gum‘a (both Mattokki), and Abdel Halim Sabbar (Halfawi) gained a PhD. However, most young Andaandi speakers have not been able to study at the University of Khartoum that, according to some Sudanese friends, is considered the best institution of higher education in the Sudan. Unlike schools in Dongola town and Khartoum, schools in the villages of the Dongola Reach where Nubian children and teenagers still speak Nubian do not seem to be able to prepare their pupils sufficiently for the entry exams at the University of Khartoum. In addition, with the exception of Farid Mekkawi and Sāmi ‘Abdallah, to the best of my knowledge none has worked alongside western archeologists.

How can I connect with such a diversity of Nubians, aiming to be inclusive to as many as possible, while overcoming possible differences? While I cannot undo the difference in formal education, other areas allow me to come closer to the average Nubian way of living.

When visiting Nubia and Nubians, usually I travel by public transport. While that requires more time than private transport, especially as at intermediate bus stops vehicles are chronically overloaded and not able to take on any additional passengers, I sometimes meet Nubian fellow passengers and relate to the community already before visiting a specific village. Public transport is one place where I am recognised and then introduced to other Nubians. “Using public transport is a refusal of [high] status, which allows one to encounter others on a more level playing field.”¹⁵⁹

After arriving at my destination in a Nubian village, my aim has been to treat each Nubian the same, regardless of origin or level of formal schooling. I aim to show a

... willingness to be taught by those whose knowledge and whose ways of knowing may radically differ from [my] own.¹⁶⁰

In linguistics that is relatively easy, as anybody speaking Andaandi or Mattokki knows Nubian better than I do. He is the teacher, I am the student.

¹⁵⁹ GROHMANN 2020: 147.

¹⁶⁰ PREMAWARDHANA 2022: 68.

If my host invites me to visit some other villagers I take up the offer. Usually these visits are to Nubians of the same age or older. These mainly social calls embedded in the main visit hopefully remove fears that I may change the checks and balances that enable a peaceful life of the community.

As many of my hosts want to honour me, I am given honourific titles when talking in Arabic, as they also do among themselves. That may create distance.

I am not aware how many times I have transgressed my own objectives. Only my Nubian friends can tell. I am sorry to say that a very few Nubians have discontinued working with me.

2.3.6. Empowering the Insider

Initially my studies focused on linguistics, i.e. collecting language data and discussing language-related questions, posed by both sides. As a result, it was mainly Nubians interested in their languages or wanting to share information about their sociocultural traits who invited me for further encounters. Later that group extended to any Nubian attracted to Nubian culture or identity, even if showing low competency in the Andaandi or Mattokki language. First, I met individual Nubians in teahouses and clubs, then I was invited into their homes, getting to know other family members, finally even the female ones. I acknowledge that encounters, especially at the beginning, were by chance. Later, these Nubians connected me with other interested Nubians so that a broader cross-section of the Nubian populace participated in this research.

The Nubian research participants are “experts of a different kind: knowledgeable people who have contributed greatly”, whose voices need to be heard in western academia and whose input needs to be made visible. In the linguistic profession “they are called informants by some, ... Never colleagues of course, and never linguists.”¹⁶¹ They are the ones that can overcome the ‘othering’ perspective inherent in so much research. Where I have had a “gatekeeping role”¹⁶² my aim was to open the gates wide, so that their knowledge spreads. One university lecturer from Sukkot in Nubia explained:

¹⁶¹ Both quotes from STORCH 2019: 19-20.

¹⁶² MIGGE 2020: 174. Cf. MIGGE 2020: 162.

Furthermore, there is a huge knowledge of Nubian languages ... accumulated in the course of long, long time (lifetime) by amateur revivalists who are almost above 50 years (I myself was one of them). I believe that this knowledge should be valued as they are skilled speakers of their respective languages. This knowledge, I believe, should be (1) acknowledged, and (2) polished by academia.¹⁶³

The Nubian minority within the Arab-dominated Sudan and Egypt is experiencing an imposition of Arab culture and language¹⁶⁴ and an imbalance in economic means. It seems that Dongolawi who have detached themselves from Nubian culture and languages achieve higher positions in politics and the economy. As a result, many Nubian parents regard “[I]anguage shift, under such conditions, [as] a strategy for survival.” Insisting on linguistic minority rights would not result in a change of status, as that could imply a “spatial ‘fixedness’ of people [and] languages”, “keeping people in the marginalized region”,¹⁶⁵ unrealisable in times of global and social mobility.

Therefore, I am glad about mainly voluntary Nubian partners that aspire to gain as much knowledge as possible about their native languages and a desire to analyse them, frequently without any prior formal linguistic training. Here, I may empower Nubians active in the linguistic or cultural sphere and give them a voice by transmitting their knowledge.

One difference lies in the “spheres of influence”: grassroots scholars are more “able to do a great deal within [their] community”; I have “many contacts outside of the [language] community”,¹⁶⁶ and opportunities to attend international conferences. While Western linguistic knowledge as imputed at many of these conferences is frequently part of “the narrative of modernization”,¹⁶⁷ I have aimed to introduce some Nubians to academic circles and speak on their behalf. Hāmīd Khabīr, whose proverb collection

¹⁶³ Muhammed Jalal Hashim 2010, p.c. by email.

¹⁶⁴ BLOMMAERT 2004b: 58 calls that “linguistic imperialism”.

¹⁶⁵ All three quotes from BLOMMAERT 2004b: 56+60.

¹⁶⁶ COMBS and PENFIELD 2012: 471.

¹⁶⁷ SMITH 2011: 89.

provided a starting point for this thesis and who cannot travel internationally, feels encouraged to hear from other Nubians that at international conferences he and his work are referred to. Also other Nubians who maintain their language and culture express gratitude that their voices and opinions as a non-dominant group are being acknowledged and valued outside of their community.

Research participants in this thesis belong to a non-dominant community experiencing disrespect and even sometimes oppression. During lunch at the University of Khartoum in 2009 I overheard a Sudanese who is writing a PhD in linguistics saying wholeheartedly that Andaandi is not a language. The typical Nubian grassroots scholar has to work against all these obstacles.

This explains why one of the strongest and most critical Nubian voices mentions one further benefit of outsiders working in Nubia: “Oppressed people, like the Nubians, need a leader to lead them out of oppression. Foreigners can also take on that role.” Another Nubian narrows down: “Foreigners are needed for all marginalised languages in the Sudan.” More specifically yet another Nubian said that due to the more repressive atmosphere in his home country a Nubian may not be able to express certain ideas as openly as a Westerner. But a Nubian may quote content from a well-researched Western book, thereby transmitting his own opinion.¹⁶⁸

Early in my research, at Argo boys’ school some teachers took me into two classes. First, I spoke some English with the pupils attending these classes, then Andaandi with the Andaandi speakers. Only an outsider could break the rule that Andaandi is not to be spoken in class.¹⁶⁹ Although pupils were a bit shy answering in Andaandi, it was a step forward. Only recently at another

¹⁶⁸ Nubian voices in 2009, 2011 and 2023, p.c. – Cf. GILLEY (2007: 413) who lived and worked in the Sudan for 22 years had a similar experience when she was asked to present “a paper about the situation of teaching English at the University of Khartoum” where the quality of teaching had markedly decreased over the years due to lack of funding. She writes: “I decided, they [the English department at the university] wanted me to be honest in this public forum, and I, as a foreigner, I had the freedom to do just that. ... I could be forgiven. A Sudanese staff member would likely suffer forevermore for saying what they wanted me to say.”

¹⁶⁹ It is to be remembered that the boys’ parents most probably had been beaten for speaking Andaandi at school!

school attended by Dongolawi, boys felt more free to speak in Andaandi with me.

Only a Nubian can tell how much I have achieved in treading the fine line between having power to free and empower others, and having power to put myself in the driver's seat, making people do something they would not have done otherwise, or even being destructive. By preferring some sources of western epistemology over against others and selectively transmitting them, I may have influenced the insider. For a human being it is impossible to disempower oneself completely. The question is what limits and controls power. In conclusion, although my studies are discussed in a western environment, its legitimacy should come from the insiders.

Based on the long-term insight of this research I contradict John Edwards and purposely include the “ethnocultural community” and grassroots scholars:

I omit from the discussion here any mention of those scholarly activists who are, themselves, from the ethnocultural community about which they write, and whose claims they advocate. There is a good case to be made for the insights and nuanced observations that may be available only to insiders; but an equally good case can be made about lapses in objectivity.¹⁷⁰

Edwards seems to be influenced by the story of modern secularism that it could provide a point of view from which any topic can be looked at objectively and unemotionally. I doubt such a claim.¹⁷¹

Instead, in this thesis, frequently Nubian voices are given opportunity to state their knowledge individually in all its diversity, without being collectively summarized. The rationale behind this approach is to respect each voice and show the nuances of their presentations.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ EDWARDS 2010: 34.

¹⁷¹ Such a statement is also refuted by FABIAN 2014: 60: “But it is truly intriguing in the international context of anthropology that rejection of subjectivity did not lead to contempt for ethnographic ‘observation’.” Additionally, FABIAN (2014: 89) does not necessarily see “anthropological objectivity ... in opposition to subjectivity.”

¹⁷² Cf. GUMMA IBRAHIM and JAEGER 2010: 196: “Their members [of oral societies] feel that written societies do not always show the necessary respect for their way of

I have searched for opportunities where not only myself but also Nubians have been able to participate and present. However, due to the English language being a prerequisite at most international conferences and many Nubians lacking proficiency in it, their knowledge has not reached international audiences as it should have done. On top of that, financial and visa restrictions prevent most Nubians from presenting outside Africa. Since about 2015 such restrictions for travelling to Europe and the US have increased drastically, in spite of a good deal of talking about ‘globalisation’, which usually means that the West gets better access to the Global South, yet not vice versa.

Opportunities for Nubians to present their knowledge and produce it at international conferences with support from myself have been manifold.¹⁷³ Such occasions meant hard work on both sides as a mainly western audience puts so much more emphasis on a proper ‘paper’ than on relationship:

[For a] person imbued with a culture based on shame and honour, paper is a poor substitute for shared memories, mutual respect, and the determination to co-operate with one another.¹⁷⁴

Besides knowledge transfer from Nubia to western audiences my presence created opportunities for Nubians to connect with each other, thereby sharing their knowledge among themselves. That leads further to the question of advocacy:

Two principles are laid down by researchers; ‘the principle of error correction’ (if people believe false and damaging propositions, ...); and ‘the principle of the debt incurred’ (if a community has helped researchers by providing access and information, researchers have a corresponding duty to use their knowledge and expertise for the benefit

thinking, their oral traditions and their identity.” Gumma Ibrahim belongs to the Kordofan Nubians.

¹⁷³ One of the outcomes is KAMAL HUSSEIN and JAEGER 2022.

¹⁷⁴ LIENHARD 2016: 67; in the German original: “[Für] Menschen in ehre- und schamorientierten Kulturen [ist] Papier ein schlechter Ersatz für gemeinsame Erinnerungen, gegenseitigen Respekt und die Entschlossenheit, miteinander zu arbeiten.” Some researchers question the honour-shame dichotomy, as COZENS and OCHS 2019: 238. Still, Lienhard’s quote fits Nubian sociocultural traits.

of the community). This amounts to an argument that advocacy – research *for* as well as *on* social subjects – is not just an optional extra, a bonus researchers may look for or not, as they decide; in the right circumstances it is an obligation.¹⁷⁵

My role as a cultural and linguistic advocate in Nubian matters on an institutional level has had its limits, both in the Middle East and in Europe, as I experienced a couple of times, especially with UNESCO. Even the prospect of introducing grassroots scholars did not enhance interest.

There remains the question of the researcher’s political involvement.¹⁷⁶ Nubian friends, in particular in the Sudan, advised me to stay away from any specific kind of political activity as that would hinder the linguistic and cultural research they wanted to benefit from and therefore did not want to be jeopardized. However, unfortunately in the contemporary world linguistic and anthropological research seems to have a political component.

In conclusion, I have not been successful in advocacy on an institutional level and have not aimed to be active in politics. However, a researcher who takes the necessary time and effort to center a speech community, so that they can do linguistics and anthropological research in a way that fits their understanding allows the power balance to be changed. The fact that a non-Nubian is prepared to support Nubians in their research creates a more beneficial environment for Nubian cultural activities, sometimes making other Nubians want to join.¹⁷⁷

2.3.7. Approach toward Faith and Religion

I present Nubia and Nubian sociocultural traits in English or German, both languages that in their countries of origin express a strong dualistic worldview, compartmentalizing secular and religious aspects in daily life. In Nubia there was no Enlightenment period where religion had to take a back seat or was put in opposition to reasoning and understanding, creating a secular-

¹⁷⁵ CAMERON 1997: 149.

¹⁷⁶ As discussed in ERRINGTON 2008: 161. Cf. HOMEYER 2020: 25: “My own investments in this research are both aesthetic and political, ...”

¹⁷⁷ Abdel Halim Sabbar 2004, p.c.

religious divide.¹⁷⁸ Instead, for most Nubians like most people living in the Sudan and the Arab world, faith in one God is an integral aspect. They practise their Muslim faith regularly, respecting and being hospitable to people from other religions of the book. When entering the Nubian community I as a practising Christian have not experienced problems based on differences in faith, except with a few Nubian Salafi-orientated Muslims.

I favour the term ‘faith’ instead of ‘religion’, a term in need of decolonisation.¹⁷⁹ Faith is not a private matter. Many Nubians are glad to express their faith and discuss similarities and differences between the faiths, also in public group settings. By contrast, as a western researcher I am expected to work dualistically, being “constrained by the modernist epistemological assumptions and commitments that have generally governed western academic discourse”,¹⁸⁰ keeping my faith and my research separate. Therefore, I take the critique of Orientalism as “a secular tradition of continuity”¹⁸¹ seriously. The western mind has a tendency to secularise religion and understand itself as the only means to enable independent anthropological research.¹⁸²

Coming from a background of agricultural studies and faith, Jim Harries, now living and working in Kenya, writes:

¹⁷⁸ PREMAWARDHANA (2022: 69) speaks of “the Enlightenment’s fundamental grounding in disembodied rationality”.

¹⁷⁹ In no way do I want to equate ‘religion’ and ‘faith’. CAVANAUGH (2007: 249-252) discusses some of the problems of defining ‘religion’, concluding that thus far scholars have not agreed “on a definition of religion.” Also, in post Enlightenment thinking, ‘religion’ is too frequently related to ‘violence’, “serv[ing] a particular need for their consumers in the West” (CAVANAUGH 2007: 241). In using the term ‘faith’ instead I follow HARRIES 2016: 94.

¹⁸⁰ MENESES et al 2014: 82. This article deals in depth with “Engaging the Religiously Committed Other” in anthropology.

¹⁸¹ Quoted in FLUEHR-LOBBAN and RHODES 2004: xxi.

¹⁸² E.g. MAHMOOD 2006: 338: “Critical reading of the text here assumes a sovereign subject who reconciles the claims of scripture against those of reason, ... this form of critical reading is the nadir of man’s attempt to grapple with the divine — all others who do not agree with this method stand in a false relation to this quest.”

In the West in recent days, all too often it has come to be believed that one's religion ... is not connected to the "real objective world" as perceived through the senses. This belief limits the ability of the West to communicate clearly with the majority world.¹⁸³

Instead, I assume that faith and research can be integrated in a meaningful way, even "expand the discourse in ways that provide explanatory value".¹⁸⁴ The Ethiopian philosopher Odomaro Mubangizi rightly notes that "the African world view ... should be understood from three main perspectives: cosmological, anthropological and theological."¹⁸⁵ Therefore, I do not bracket out the Nubian Muslim research participants' faith background and

become distinctly uncomfortable when discussions with my Malay 'informants' turn, as they often do, to their experiences of ... Muslim holy men ... [as] strategic agnosticism on the part of the unbeliever in his/her interaction with believers may well be, and indeed often is, taken as condescending and insulting by those whose beliefs are rendered tolerable.¹⁸⁶

Saba Mahmood comes up with a similar observation:

Underlying ... is a secularized conception of religion in which religion is understood to be an abstracted category of beliefs and doctrines.¹⁸⁷

Secularism may misunderstand some aspects of the believing Nubian research participant. That is also my criticism of Southern Theory (section 2.2.3). Thus far it is purely secular orientated in spite of the majority of people from the Global South practising a faith, with the result that "non-Western scholars ... must learn the secular idiom"¹⁸⁸ to participate in academia.

¹⁸³ HARRIES 2013: 57.

¹⁸⁴ MENESES et al 2014: 82.

¹⁸⁵ MUBANGIZI 2017: 3.

¹⁸⁶ KAHN 2011: 78+80-81. I am thankful that Kahn openly discusses the problems of understanding in anthropological research based on the confrontation of belief and unbelief.

¹⁸⁷ MAHMOOD 2006: 341.

¹⁸⁸ MENESES et al 2014: 83.

For a Nubian faith is something practical, having implications for most of life. It offers a “religious way of knowing”.¹⁸⁹ Nubian epistemologies are taken seriously when faith knowledge is included and considered as legitimate. Therefore, during in-depth visits to Nubians I do everything possible to respect their faith and to not hide my Christian faith background.¹⁹⁰ Nubians with whom a close relationship exists become aware that my faith commitment influences the way I live and work.¹⁹¹ As a result, we are able to establish common ground, enabling the kind of metaphysical discourse so much enjoyed by many Nubians. When during a visit to a Nubian research participant I am asked to greet an ill relative, sometimes I offer to pray for that person, or announce that later I will do so. Most times such an offer is thankfully accepted. This kind of “interreligious participation”, “a privileged path to solidarity across lines of religious difference”¹⁹² works both ways. When I was ill, and also later my mother, Muslim friends from the Sudan and Egypt told me that on hearing the news they had prayed for me/my mother. In the Nubian mind, and also in mine, participating in research and praying for a friend enhances trust and human relationships.¹⁹³

In the same way, some research participants suspend our common investigation to attend the five-times-daily mosque prayers. When returning they are excited to carry on. They feel that their religious and metaphysical knowledge is beneficial to our research and broadens it. Thereby we overcome what

¹⁸⁹ The term is taken from HARRIES 2021.

¹⁹⁰ “the non-claiming of one’s own beliefs, whatever those are – is an act of deception that fundamentally undermines trust-building.” Glenn Hinson’s response to MENESES et al 2014’s paper (p. 95).

Also, ‘Aisha’, a member of the Sudanese women’s movement and a Muslim woman reasons how learning about the Christian faith while being at school in the 1940s improved the quality of her life. (ISMAIL and MAKKI 1990: 114)

¹⁹¹ After supporting one lecturer at the University of Khartoum in regaining some lost computer files he wrote (2005): “You always amaze me by your absolute commitment to your religion, family, work and your friends.”

¹⁹² PREMAWARDHANA 2022: 65+66.

¹⁹³ Cf. AŽDAJIĆ’s (2020: 27) experience when studying Sufi sheikhs in Bosnia.

Kahn calls a ‘nondialogue’.¹⁹⁴ “[R]ather than an obstacle to anthropological knowledge, [our] faith” becomes “a prerequisite for it.”¹⁹⁵ Our conversations have reached a stage where some Muslim friends openly talk about difficulties they experience in practising their faith and I about mine. We discuss respectfully points of uniqueness in our faiths, against “[t]he liberal agenda of the equality of all religions [that] captures the mood of the post-Christian West”¹⁹⁶ and thus “challenge our own ways of thinking.”¹⁹⁷ Especially Ḥāmid Khabīr is a devout Muslim. If a proverb has a religious meaning both sides look for avenues to get another point of view and make trust in God fruitful in understanding it.¹⁹⁸

Some of the sayings of mystic Sufis’ have become proverbs.¹⁹⁹ The Bible contains the Book of Proverbs consisting mainly of wisdom sayings and proverbs. In communities where faith is important, proverbs are interpreted within one’s faith framework. Therefore, understanding Nubian proverbs is supported by at least some knowledge of both faiths, Islam and Christianity. Contemporary Nubians are Muslims, and so understand their proverbs from a Muslim perspective, yet some proverbs also show traces from medieval Nubian Christianity.²⁰⁰ Additionally, some writings by African Christians looking into post-Western Christianity contribute to a better understanding of

¹⁹⁴ KAHN 2011: 82: “It has become clear that, despite the benefit of such an approach [i.e., bracketing out] ... encounters between the secular and the religious, the nondialogue on which it depends can no longer hold.”

¹⁹⁵ WILLERSLEV and SUHR 2018: 66.

¹⁹⁶ SANNEH 2008: 140-141.

¹⁹⁷ WILLERSLEV and SUHR 2018: 67.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. LUHRMANN 2018: 80 viewing God from an anthropological perspective: “Yet god (!) is the most radically other of radical otherness.”

¹⁹⁹ Cf. sayingspoint.com/islamic-sayings [last accessed on 23 August 2021].

²⁰⁰ The term ‘medieval Nubia’ is the standard expression used by many Nubiologists (as WELSBY 2002 and RUFFINI 2012) when describing the Nubian Christian kingdom period from roughly the 6th until the 14th or 15th century. In no way do I want to colonialise ‘medieval Nubia’ by employing a term coined for a historical period in Europe.

current developments in the Global South in general and in Africa specifically.²⁰¹

I am in contact with many western scholars who work according to a purely secular approach and I very much value their input. My comments describe certain aspects of my own work where a different point of worldview allows additional insights into the diversity of Nubian society and culture including their proverbs. In no way do I intend to devalue the research performed by secular scholars.

While my principal responsibility is toward the Nubians in the Sudan and in Egypt, I bear some kind of obligation toward the Christian minorities in these countries, more than a secular researcher. By positioning myself as a person with a Christian faith ethos I consider that my behaviour may influence the way Muslim Nubians view their Christian fellow citizens. In some Egyptian Nubian villages Coptic Christians own a shop, like the carpenter shop in Debood village. Nubian friends from Debood assume that the Coptic carpenters and I have a common bond, and therefore expect me to greet at that shop during my visits, which I gladly do.

The German hospital in Aswan has a distinctively Christian ethos, and is frequented by both Muslims, including Nubian Muslims, and Christians. As during my research trips to Egyptian Nubia I usually stay in a guest room at the German hospital, in Nubian villages I am considered to be associated with it. Again, I have to behave in a way that does not impede the hospital's positive reputation, an important factor in keeping peaceful and cordial relations between Egyptian Christians and Muslims.

Refugees from the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan in the Dongola Reach, both Muslims and Christians, usually perform menial tasks with low status. Being aware that I am a representative of a faith whose current stronghold is in the Global South, I openly associate with the Christians in the Sudanese Church of Christ in Dongola town and show them the respect they deserve,

²⁰¹ Cf. KWAME BEDIAKO 2008; SANNEH 1989 and 2008.

resulting in feeling valued, something they lacked during the rule of the National Islamic Front in the Sudan since 1989.²⁰²

In conclusion, meeting Muslims and Christians in the Sudan and Egypt, not from a position of patronage but of vulnerability, and interacting and communicating with them involves a “challenge [to my] own ways of thinking, ... a decolonialization of thought.”²⁰³

2.3.8. Participatory Approach

The speakers of Andaandi and Mattokki Nubian and their descendants are the ones explaining the meaning of proverbs, wanting to document them and the wisdom embedded in them, and passing it on to future generations in the context of language and culture shift. They should be in the centre of this research. At some stage I had to stop pushing deconstruction as research method, as members of these two ethnicities were too vulnerable and their languages and cultures in a state of being superimposed by the more powerful Arab ones. I realised how unhappy aspects of deconstruction made even a highly educated Nubian co-investigator who had spent a good amount of time in the West and read research from the West. How much would the average Nubian, with less formal education, be able to participate in research based on such an approach? Also, if Nubian proverbs and the wisdom that has developed and been passed on over a very long period are forcefully deconstructed, what does one put in its place? The pull for Arabic would become even stronger.

²⁰² Based on Peter Beyerhaus’ research in the late 1950s, RICHEBÄCHER (2022: 225) calls these churches a postcolonial and independent church on a divine mission. I am thankful for the knowledge I gain from Christians in the Sudan and Egypt and aim to carry it to Western churches. That differs from ‘development’ and social projects initiated by Western churches that frequently transport Western finances, ideas and theology to the Global South.

²⁰³ WILLERSLEV and SUHR 2018: 67; based on Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2011). For an in-depth analysis of aspects of vulnerability see HARRIES 2013 and HARRIES 2016. Jim Harries is the chairman of the ‘Alliance for Vulnerable Mission’ (vulnerablemission.org), a group of practitioners that question aspects of power and dependence on foreign money and colonial languages in mission work in the Global South.

Therefore, a methodology suiting the way the average Nubian thinks and acts, allowing active participation in a safe environment, as far as possible, is required. A third of the way into my research I encountered the research of the Egyptian KAMAL FAHMI (2007).²⁰⁴ Neither a linguist nor an anthropologist, he is a university lecturer of social studies who combined his research with practical application among street children in Cairo from 1993 onward until its abrupt end in 2001. He realised that

... placing the control of the production and distribution of knowledge in the hands of experts, their techniques and methods were actually reinforcing the imposition of the western development model with all its contradictions.”²⁰⁵

In order to overcome such power relationship based on knowledge he applied Participatory Action Research (PAR):

The basic ideology of PAR is that self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed, will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis. In this process others may play a catalytic and supportive role but will not dominate.²⁰⁶

The approach is based on Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’.²⁰⁷ It considers the role of the non-dominant but also the necessity of non-dominant people to become conscious of their situation and to navigate themselves without an outside leader. In literacy it has been applied with positive results.²⁰⁸

Kamal Fahmi’s Egyptian background indicates that the approach he chose fits a Middle Eastern context, or, at least, can be adapted to it. While not every Nubian is poor or feels oppressed, two important aspects are that

²⁰⁴ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 99.

²⁰⁵ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 15.

²⁰⁶ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 17. I mainly rely on his way of describing PAR. CHEVALIER and BUCKLES 2019 provide a more general description of PAR.

²⁰⁷ FREIRE 1970.

²⁰⁸ Cf. MALONE and MALONE 1999.

- Nubian research participants transform actively their environment that they know much better than the outsider and
- there is a place for the outsider to provide support.

A working relationship between the researcher and the researched based on mutual responsibility is possible. It is

subject-subject rather than subject-object. ... Thus, the positivist methodological tools in terms of design, concept formation, measurement, validity, relevance, and so on take second place to the emphasis on establishing processes of collaboration and dialogue that aim at empowering participants and establishing community solidarity.²⁰⁹

In other words:

Partnership ... is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility in achieving shared goals.²¹⁰

Such relationships fit the Nubian spirit much better than a relation between an outside researcher and an inside ‘informant’.²¹¹ It allows both sides to ask questions and to mutually research and answer them. It replaces questionnaires (for individual or group interviews) by dialogue. “This sharing [in a dialogue] invites [both] participants to engage in explicit reflexivity.”²¹²

One pitfall explaining why PAR cannot prevail in academia is that it goes against the trend of rapid production and publication, so much needed to advance one’s academic career:

[W]hen researchers with academic careers develop strong ties with community groups in PAR undertakings that are strongly oriented toward community empowerment, they are likely to be the least successful in academia – a combination of activism with an academic career requires going against an academic mainstream that focuses on research products rather than on the research process; on regular

²⁰⁹ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 25.

²¹⁰ CHEVALIER and BUCKLES 2019: 28.

²¹¹ While the term ‘informant’ is outdated I use it here to show the way research has been done in many instances in history, and still maybe today.

²¹² KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 26.

publications in academic journals rather than in publications for laypersons; and on accountability to academic standards rather than to activist standards.²¹³

Another pitfall is that the outcome of a PAR project is open-ended. By contrast, when receiving a request for a research grant a sponsor wants to know what will be achieved:

[In an] open-ended process, each PAR needs to progress along the emerging, sequencing, and unfolding realities of a group's life, which are continuously shaped, forged, formed, and constructed by the interactions among the different members.²¹⁴

As PAR works especially among oppressed or vulnerable non-dominant communities, the outside researcher needs to provide constant encouragement:

Disenfranchised groups often internalize the negative connotations of the stigma imposed on them by a dominating structure, which may reinforce subordination to outside researchers.²¹⁵

As a result, the researcher becomes “moderator, coach, host informant, and participant”.²¹⁶ In the end PAR requires a long-term commitment:

PAR processes ... are understandably very time-consuming, labor intensive, field based, longitudinal, and engaged undertakings that require extensive patience, perseverance, and a capacity to handle a great deal of ambiguity.²¹⁷

Before venturing out one needs to weigh whether one is willing to commit to such an approach that cannot be changed at a later stage without negative repercussions. The benefit is to become acquainted so well with some inside

²¹³ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 30.

²¹⁴ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 160-161.

²¹⁵ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 32.

²¹⁶ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 73.

²¹⁷ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 161.

participants that they become like close relations. Yet that goes against remaining objective, and not “over-identifying with the other.”²¹⁸

Another researcher presents a good rationale for using PAR in research and a more general description how such research is done:

PAR seemed like the only way to conduct our research ethically and responsibly, with a real concern for people as opposed to extracting and analyzing data for the sole purpose of advancing knowledge and our own intellectual agendas and careers.²¹⁹

While so far PAR has been presented as a secular approach, it is also applicable in research from a faith perspective. PAR can influence the way a believer sees God, his fellow beings and his environment, as observed among members of some Pentecostal churches where PAR methods were applied.²²⁰

2.3.9. Conclusion

Long-term or at least above-average time commitment and interaction, and voluntary participation lead to increased trust between the speech community and the researcher. They begin to feel mutually responsible to each other, minimising unintentional harm. Misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviour due to lack of cultural knowledge are tolerated to a greater degree. Working collaboratively and learning from each other in meaningful and balanced group settings offering intimate space and avoiding the creation of hierarchies strengthens such a process. Only then is empowerment possible. Without a trusting relationship the Nubians I know would refuse any outside attempt to share in their efforts.

Any outsider who sympathises and connects with members of an ethnic community, appreciates their histories and knowledge, while also respecting their intimate spaces, will be more readily accepted. When visiting a teahouse

²¹⁸ KAMAL FAHMI 2007: 161. Cf. NICHOLAS (2017: 23) writing about her research in Nubia: “When studying culture and their [the Nubians’] love of the land, it is necessary to become non-academic in order to understand the people’s feelings, and what motivates them.”

²¹⁹ CHEVALIER and BUCKLES 2019: 1.

²²⁰ JOHNS 1998.

in Alexandria owned by a Nubian and frequented by Nubians, I was introduced to a young *Ṣaʿīdi* Egyptian customer. He was described as being polite and willing to learn from Nubians. So he was included in this Nubian environment.

As a result, research participants become friends, joys and sorrows are shared.²²¹ While this is adequate behaviour for most Nubians, the researcher loses some of the impartiality expected in academia and may even overstep boundaries regarded as essential in western research. To uncover such taking of the Nubians' side, it needs an independent scholar (outside of the Nubian community and myself) to receive and evaluate the insights presented below. But such an independent scholar could only do so when staying long and close enough with Nubians, risking to become as subjective as myself. Therefore, I am glad that nowadays it becomes more obvious than before what is lost if the ethnographer "conscious[ly performs an] ascetic withdrawal" according to a "positivist-pragmatist ethos".²²²

2.4. Output

In Participatory Action Research it is difficult to describe envisaged goals at an early stage as that would hinder the non-dominant group discovering their own goals:

Most of us, as outsiders, play no direct role in ... the decisions made by vernacular groups about development and maintenance of their language. But we can sometimes have a role in helping people become aware of options and the consequences of decisions made in other places and by other groups. ... And sometimes we can even help them develop the tools they need to implement their decisions.²²³

Therefore, instead of setting goals I look at desired outputs. Of course, I can only describe outputs that I have observed. There will be others, not discussed here. Outputs are not only papers and articles. In the sense of Participatory

²²¹ As the medical doctor HERZFELD 1966c did.

²²² BUNZL 2014: xiv.

²²³ MILLER 2000: 185.

Action Research, outputs that transform the community through its own social activities are much more important.

Throughout the two decades my research has been continuing, some tendencies have become recognisable. One Dongolawi who very much wanted his language to stay alive pointed out that since my visits to one of the islands where Andaandi is spoken, some inhabitants have developed a more positive attitude toward their native language. Looking back over the years, on average it was mainly individuals who were influenced through my actions.

The awareness of language being a marker of identity is especially increasing among younger Nubians that only have a passive understanding of the Nubian languages that their parents spoke with communicative competence, yet did not pass on, instead steering their children toward the use of a dominant language. My research and its outputs are related to this environment.

The most obvious output intended by this research is to make

- Andaandi and Mattokki Nubian proverbs and their cultural background accessible to the community.

Especially young Nubians yearn to learn more about their sociocultural background, which includes proverbs. Maher Habbob has already published a collection of Fadijja proverbs in Arabic and later in English.²²⁴ In this thesis I begin with English, tending to write a style of English that Nubians living in the English-speaking diaspora or with formal education in English would understand. An Arabic translation is planned for a later stage.

In this subchapter, I begin with computational linguistic services provided for the Nubian community, followed by presenting the research participants' knowledge at international conferences and in international publications, literacy activities, and finally locally produced dictionaries, where I did not have any input.

²²⁴ MAHER HABBBOB 2014 and MAHER HABBBOB 2022.

2.4.1. Services – The Sophia Nubian font

In order to make the Nubian proverbs accessible, they have to be written in a way favoured by literate Nubians. For this, a font for writing the Nubian languages has been provided, named Sophia Nubian font. It serves the community in their efforts to continue language development.

After the Egyptian Nubian Mokhtar Khalil Kabbara had introduced the Nubian script to the Nubian community and recommended its use for writing the contemporary Nubian languages in the 1990s, the late Prof Suad Ibrahim Ahmed (1935-2013) from Wadi Halfa, among others, took up his idea, co-founded the Nubian Studies and Documentation Centre in Cairo and started literacy courses. In order to print the teaching materials, non-Unicode fonts such as the Ibrim font, the Mokhtar font (named after Mokhtar Khalil Kabbara), and the Nobiin font were created. The life-span of these fonts was limited due to the advance of Unicode that encompasses all characters of the world's ancient and contemporary languages. The inclusion of the Nubian characters in the Unicode character set and a subsequent Nubian Unicode font became necessary.

After returning to Khartoum and hearing about my background in Computational Linguistics, in the early 2000s Suad Ibrahim asked me to approach the Unicode Consortium²²⁵ to incorporate the Nubian characters into the Unicode character list. As the Unicode Consortium only accepts applications by teams including members of the ethnic community, we jointly collected the necessary information and described the Nubian character set as used by the contemporary Nubian community. It consists mainly of Greek and Coptic characters, already part of the Unicode charts, plus a few specific characters that can be derived from Meroitic, so far missing.

When after a prolonged illness Suad Ibrahim was ready to continue the application process we unexpectedly received news that the characters specific to Old Nubian had already been incorporated in the Coptic Unicode Page.²²⁶ The Nubian community would have preferred a distinct Nubian

²²⁵ www.unicode.org/history/summary.html [last accessed on 23 July 2020]

²²⁶ unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2C80.pdf [last accessed on 23 July 2020] When the Unicode consortium defined the Nubian characters for digital use, they decided to

Unicode Page. However, it would have been difficult to disconnect Nubian and Coptic, as had been done with Greek and Coptic before: and would have extended the time period until a Nubian Unicode font became available.

Parallel to this development, Kamal Hussein and I worked on the phonology of Andaandi, also considering related Nubian languages.²²⁷

The next step was to build a Unicode-based font that included the newly defined Nubian characters. In 2007 one of the members of the SIL - Non-Roman Script Initiative.²²⁸, Lorna Priest-Evans, indicated her willingness to provide technical support to the Nubian community. The decision was taken to create a new font specially geared toward the needs of first learners. It was based on the older IPA Sophia font, created for similar purposes, and similar in shape to the Helvetica font, which was popular at that time. Therefore, it was named Sophia Nubian. OpenType and Graphite code were added for Nubian macrons and the Nubian OY (‘u’) vowel.

Herman Bell, who had been working on the old and modern Nubian languages since the 1960s, was willing to provide expert advice and feedback. El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, highly proficient in Andaandi Nubian literacy, tested the new font extensively. I coordinated the development and networked between the different parties. In November 2008 the Sophia Nubian font was released and made available on the internet for download.²²⁹

include the special Old Nubian characters with Coptic. They did so more for computational than for linguistic reasons.

²²⁷ The research was published as JAEGER and KAMAL HUSSEIN 2012.

²²⁸ scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&id=welcome [last accessed on 23 July 2020]. They support non-dominant languages with non-Roman scripts. Nowadays, it is named the ‘SIL Writing Systems Technology team’.

²²⁹ software.sil.org/sophianubian [last accessed on 23 July 2020]. It was released under the SIL Open Font License, so is available free for non-commercial download, very important for the speech community. The font log describes it as follows: “Sophia Nubian is a sans serif, Unicode-compliant font based ... Its primary purpose is to provide adequate representation for Nubian languages which use the Coptic Unicode character set. Since Nubian languages do not use casing, uppercase characters are not included in this font. A basic set of Latin glyphs is also provided.”

The option to develop a specific Old Nubian font for scholars and archaeologists was considered. While that was only realised at a later stage,²³⁰ at the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies at the British Museum in August 2010 the Sophia Nubian font was already being used by some archaeologists working on Old Nubian.

Nowadays, Nubians who write the contemporary Nubian languages on an electronic device in Nubian script mainly use the Sophia Nubian Font.

2.4.2. Academic status and academic papers

There is great interest among Nubians to present local epistemologies at international venues. While I would prefer for Nubians to be independent, there is still some need to enable such participation by a Westerner. The western academic system is very different from the Sudanese and Egyptian ones, and navigating it can be disheartening for a non-westerner. When Nubians feel ready to undertake academic work their level of English may not be sufficient enough to read fundamental research. Especially technical terminology presents a great hurdle. Also, due to financial and visa restrictions Nubian epistemology is rare at international academic conferences. Therefore, I consider one of my roles as that of an encourager and a mediator. In these roles, I have to speak plainly and intelligibly to Nubian grassroots scholars, missing nuances that western terminology aims to make visible.

Examples are the joint papers with the Dongolawi KAMAL HUSSEIN “Aspects of Kenzi-Dongolawi Phonology Related to Orthography”, “Some aspects of deontic modality in Andaandi Nubian”, and “Three particles in Andaandi Nubian interrogative clauses: aba, sen, and on” were either published (2012 and 2022) or are in the process of being accepted for publication respectively. There is also the Fadijja MAHER HABBOB’s (2023) conference paper “The resettlement of the people of Tūmās wa ‘Afyā”.

To a certain extent previous publications about Nubian proverbs in which I mention the names of Nubian research participants help them to feel partly

²³⁰ Sawarda Nubian font developed by Hatim-Arbaab Eujayl in 2021. Cf. unionfornubianstudies.org/projects/sawarda

compensated for not being able to address an international audience themselves. In this thesis I follow the same line of documenting.

In a more recent development educated Nubians increasingly support themselves. Khayria Mūsa a retired school director and volunteer in teaching Mattokki reports that she receives more requests from Nubian students than ever before to help them write an M.A. about aspects of Nubia or the Mattokki Nubian language. However, these requests come from Nubians living in Cairo, not in the homelands.²³¹

2.4.3. Nubian Literacy Activities

When describing the research environment in subchapter 2.1 I highlighted some Nubian literacy activities. I was glad that I could attend some of the **Mattokki** literacy classes, observe other literacy activities and discuss them with the organisers. Especially some young Nubians who have grown up in Egyptian cities with an above-average education have a desire to learn reading and writing Mattokki. As most of the students are not able to speak Mattokki the language of instruction in these classes is Arabic. Courses increasingly have a language learning component, frequently consisting of discussing grammar and sometimes translating phrases and sentences common in Arabic yet uncommon Mattokki into Arabic.²³² Rote learning is applied.²³³ Drills are missing. Participants are encouraged to practise Mattokki with their parents or other relatives. Courses may finish with an examination.

A journalist visiting such a Fadijja literacy and language class in Cairo wrote about her experiences:

The number of students currently enrolled in Nubian language classes is dishearteningly small. – Alkashf's [one of the Fadijja teachers] class wavers between three and five students, most of whom would rather

²³¹ Khayria Mūsa 2023, p.c. That agrees with my own impressions.

²³² Cf. *artin errigi* 'in the name of God'.

²³³ As in the Mattokki literacy material prepared by MEKKI MUḤAMMAD (2003/2014). An intermediate and a conversational course had been planned but never realised. Each course was to consist of 15 lessons, each 90 minutes.

spend their days chatting away in Arabic instead of learning a dead tongue.²³⁴

On average, students participating in the Mattokki classes I have attended showed greater motivation. It could also be that the journalist describes his own lack of motivation.

In the meantime, a younger generation of teachers has taken over, with fewer language skills than the former one, yet applying modern educational approaches similar to a class in Alexandria that I attended in 2016: The teacher asked the students to form sentences based on a word list. Some of the words were closely related to Nubian culture, and therefore needed explanation. Then the students listened to songs from the late Mattokki singer Ḥasan Ghazūli. The students were requested to recognise words and phrases, and discuss them. The teacher considered songs as highly suitable for language learning as texts are frequently repeated.

Nubian literacy teachers also employ modern devices for teaching. Among the Mattokki, ‘Umar Ḥasan “al-Deboodi” (1963-2018) was concerned about Mattokki becoming irrelevant for the younger computer-savvy generation and therefore developed a vocabulary learning software for Mattokki using the Old Nubian alphabet, based on Microsoft’s Power Point® software. Later versions included education in Nubian syntax. Finally, he uploaded some of his teachings on the internet. A private television station in Doqqi/Cairo shot seven lessons on the Mattokki language. The last lesson, dealing with the preterit tense in Mattokki, can also be viewed on YouTube.²³⁵

A more recent Nubian language learning application developed for digital devices by the Mattokki Mu‘min Sha‘bān Talūsh from Debood is named NubiApp.²³⁶

Such activities require funding, sometimes expected from outsiders like UNESCO. However, usually such funding is not advisable. Once when the

²³⁴ KASINOF 2010. Unfortunately, the whole report lacks some depth.

²³⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3PeRd7F80V [last accessed on 18 July 2014]

²³⁶ play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nobi.nobi&hl=en_US&pli=1 [last accessed on 15 August 2024] I have met the developer Mu‘min Sha‘bān Talūsh a couple of times. Cf. MOSTAFA ABDEL RAOUF 2020.

Dutch embassy sponsored a Nubian literacy class, it seemed to create some misunderstandings on a political level.²³⁷ Outside funding may also lead to dependencies and curb own initiatives. Instead, it is more neutral and sustainable if Nubians with above average income shoulder the expenditure.²³⁸

Among the **Dongolawi** Nubians I was not able to attend such literacy classes. However, I am aware that in the villages of the Dongola Reach they are going on, at least before the beginning of the war in April 2023, partly initiated by the new Nubian association ‘Unyurti’ and on an individual basis by Anwar Aḥmad Ḥasan from Seleem 3. To encourage further reading ‘The Miracle of Saint Mina’ narrative was translated from Old Nubian into Andaandi.²³⁹ This and the before mentioned Andaandi literacy activities seemed to be a long-term sustainable literacy program.

This positive development was halted by the International University of Africa in Khartoum. For more than 30 years its Yūsif Khalīfa centre, especially funded by countries from the Arab Gulf, has been aiming to write any African language with a sizable Muslim population in Arabic characters. It is argued that Muslims should not use a script developed by Christians, neglecting to say that when the *Qur’ān* was written down, early Arab Muslims did not mind using an “alphabet ... undoubtedly created by Christian missionaries in the upper Euphrates valley at the end of the 5th century AD”.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Nubians of the Nubian *turāth* [heritage] Club in Cairo 2005, p.c.

²³⁸ Cf. HARRIES 2013: 90. For further problems of outside funding see subchapter 2.3.

²³⁹ EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and VAN GERVEN OEI 2012. El-Shafie El-Guzuuli is one of the initiators of the Andaandi literacy efforts. So far I have not yet observed ‘The Miracle of Saint Mina’ used for Andaandi literacy purposes.

²⁴⁰ Taken from the exhibition of the Institute du Monde Arab ‘Langues parlées dans le monde arab’ in Paris, station ‘Languages and their written forms’. The full explanatory text is “The “Arabian” alphabet was replaced by the “Arabic” alphabet towards the 6th century AD and disappeared during the 8th century. The “Arabic” alphabet was undoubtedly created by Christian missionaries in the upper Euphrates valley at the end of the 5th century AD, spread to the Arab kingdom of Al-Hirah (in the lower Euphrates valley) and from there to the Dumet Al-Jandal oasis and Mecca where it was adopted around 575.” I visited the exhibition on 24 August 2016.

When the International University of Africa offered scholarships to teachers of Nubian on condition that they did not use the Nubian script, these scholarships were readily accepted due to the economic conditions in the Sudan. Instead, Nubian had to be written with an adapted Arabic alphabet.²⁴¹ The question of which script to prefer became a matter of discrimination and inequality by a postcolonial government.

At least one Dongolawi sees the necessity for outside input into Andaandi literacy courses:

For Nubian, the curriculum is ready; there are many primers to read; however, the need to train teachers and to make adult education classes will be difficult without intervention of NGOs such as SIL.²⁴²

Regarding structured language development it is surprising that Andaandi speakers seem to be less active than speakers of Mattokki, in spite of the average Mattokki in Egypt belonging to a lower stratum of society and represented less in national academic institutions than the Dongolawi in the Sudan. Maybe among the Mattokki the endangerment of their language is felt more urgently and results in a trend wanting to counteract it actively.

2.4.4. Locally produced Dictionaries

Early Nubian dictionaries were written by outsiders, e.g. the Mattokki Nubian dictionary of the Italian Arcangelo Carradori in the early 17th century.²⁴³ The first Andaandi dictionary was an appendix in a travel account.²⁴⁴ Nowadays the number of dictionaries produced by Nubians is astonishing, considering that reading and writing Andaandi and Mattokki are not part of the school

²⁴¹ ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016. I met the author himself and discussed his orthography with him.

²⁴² NEMAT ABDALRAHMAN MOHAMED 2020: 81; unpublished MA thesis at the University of Geneva.

²⁴³ HOFMANN 1983.

²⁴⁴ MINUTOLI 1824: 324-329. „Wörter der Dongola-Sprache, von Herrn [Girolamo] Segato mitgetheilt.“ [translated: Words of the Dongola language, shared by Mr. Segato.] Nouns are listed with ACC clitic. It also includes some idioms and phrases how to enchant a Nubian girl. – I thank Michael Zach for pointing out this dictionary. Later, Angelika Jakobi discussed that dictionary with me.

curriculum geared toward Arabic. Five examples of published Nubian dictionaries in chronological order are

- Mattokki-English vocabulary list by AHMED SOKARNO ABDEL-HAFIZ (1988) appended to his Mattokki grammar written in Roman script and sorted according to the Mattokki words;
- Basic Mattokki-Arabic dictionary with grammar by MUḤAMMAD AḤMAD SULAYMĀN (undated)²⁴⁵ from Seyaale, that uses Roman script and classifies the entries according to semantic domains;
- Nubian-Arabic-English dictionary by YŪSIF SAMBĀJ (1998) a Fadijja who besides Fadijja collected Andaandi and Mattoki lexemes, using Roman and Arabic characters for writing Nubian²⁴⁶ and sorting it according to the English lexeme;
- Mattokki-Arabic dictionary by ‘ABDU MUḤAMMAD ‘ABDU TAWĪL (2002)²⁴⁷ from Dakke, born in 1936, with Mattokki written in Arabic script;
- Andaandi-Arabic dictionary by MUḤAMMAD ‘ABD AL-MAJĪD AḤMAD IDRĪS (2004/5)²⁴⁸ from Binna Island, with Andaandi written in Arabic and Roman script, the Arabic characters determining the sort order.

Except for AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ, indigenous published dictionaries do not distinguish between short and long vowels. MUḤAMMAD AḤMAD and YŪSIF SAMBĀJ apply an English-based Roman orthography when writing Nubian that causes reading vowels to be difficult. MUḤAMMAD ‘ABD AL-MAJĪD is phonetically more consistent when writing in Roman script.

Other Andaandi and Mattokki compiled extended word lists that could be turned into dictionaries. There are more home-produced Nubian dictionaries

²⁴⁵ Most probably written before the introduction of the Nubian script in the early 1990s.

²⁴⁶ With Andaandi and Mattokki treated as one language. Yūsif Sambāj is described as “a pioneer of social work in Egypt”. (ABUBAKR SIDAHMED 2005)

²⁴⁷ While I once saw the dictionary in 2014, I was not able to note the bibliographical data. Therefore, it is not included in the bibliography.

²⁴⁸ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid does not remember the exact year of printing.

around than I am aware of.²⁴⁹ One reason for the interest in creating dictionaries is the “prestige [that] accrues to a language with the introduction of a dictionary in that language.”²⁵⁰

2.4.5. Analysis

I am glad that Nubian grassroots scholars have taken the lead in developing literacy courses, language programs and dictionaries. Still, on the whole, interest in language maintenance and revival remains limited:

... the majority of [Nubian] participants [in a formal questionnaire] (86.7%) admit that they are currently disinterested in learning the Nubian alphabet, even though almost all participants (96.7%) believe that learning the Nubian alphabet would help to revive the Nubian language.²⁵¹

It helps to compare the situation with Gaelic in Scotland and Ireland that is heavily government supported:

... interest in a ‘Gaelic revival’ is typically interest in heritage, music and dance, but rarely in the altogether more serious and difficult business of language learning. ... Indeed, Gaelic classes often have difficulty retaining their students: initial enthusiasm often tails off rather dramatically.²⁵²

In Nubian language classes I attended there was a similar decrease in participants. By contrast, a cultural event will attract more participants. One positive development is the novel approach of the Mattokki teacher Mamdūḥ Serāj who emphasises learning through Nubian songs which leads to a more stable number of participants in his language classes.

The above described dictionary-making efforts are usually conducted by individuals. One would have expected them to join forces, combining data from each of the above-mentioned dictionaries. Instead, every dictionary seems to start from scratch. The same is true for Nubian cultural websites.

²⁴⁹ Nobiin speaker 2012, p.c. by email.

²⁵⁰ MILLER 2000: 180.

²⁵¹ SYONARA TOMOUM 2013: 115.

²⁵² EDWARDS 2010: 168.

Grassroots scholars regret the lack of opportunities for exchange among Dongolawi and Mattokki of similar interest, probably due to geographical distance²⁵³ or lack of trust between Nubians originating from different villages. There have been hardly any opportunities for workshops in Egypt or the Sudan. Even the previously mentioned Andaandi Primer Workshop took place at the University of Cologne where conditions were more favourable. There are still no Andaandi or Mattokki language committees, which differs from the situation of other language communities in the Sudan, especially with ethnicities from the Nuba Mountains.

While the majority of Nile Nubian grassroots scholars use the Nubian script, there are competing attempts with the Meroitic script. One Mattokki from West Sehel developed a system for writing Mattokki with Meroitic characters and propagated it among the villagers.²⁵⁴ On the internet the Meroitic script is presented by Tayeb Saeed.²⁵⁵ Hieroglyphs would be another option for writing Mattokki, as hieroglyphs are studied by Egyptian tour guides.²⁵⁶ So far, no literacy material seems to have been developed.

Nubians engaged in literacy encounter further difficulties through the environment and new media. One Nubian lady owned a literacy book; it was eaten by ants. Literacy activities stay in competition with the increasing use of media and social media, but also with recreation.²⁵⁷

When taking all these difficulties into account it remains astonishing how many individual Nubians are active in language related activities and how much they have achieved so far.

²⁵³ ‘Umar Ḥasan 2010, p.c.; “Ustāz” ‘Awaḍ ‘Abd al-Rahīm 2015, p.c.; Jamāl al-Sayid 2022, p.c.

²⁵⁴ Sha‘bān Berber 2012, p.c. I also met one of his pupils, Aḥmad Mekki ‘Abdallah.

²⁵⁵ www.khtt.net/en/page/8577/introduction-for-the-new-nubian-alphabet [last accessed on 9 September 2020].

²⁵⁶ ‘Abd al-Hakīm Fatallah 2004, p.c.

²⁵⁷ Idrīs Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, 2015, p.c.

2.5. Identity and Political Economy

After meeting some Andaandi-speaking grassroots scholars I noted in my cultural diary: “On the whole it seems that many Dongolawi are searching for their identity: Who am I? Where am I from? Certain powers are attempting to impress an identity on them. Grassroots scholars wish to be free of this pressure. They want to live in healthy relationships. I should not adopt the attitude of those other powers. All I can do is accompany some Dongolawi and Mattokki on their quest for identity.” Also, it is to be questioned whether the noun ‘identity’ is the best choice, or whether the verb ‘identify’ fits better.²⁵⁸

I set out with two Nubian languages, Andaandi and Mattokki, spoken by sections of two ethnicities, the Dongolawi and Mattokki. In the mind of the speakers, both ethnicities are tied to geographical places, the Dongola Reach and Lower Nubia south of Aswan,²⁵⁹ yet most of the Dongolawi and Mattokki live outside these two places. Still, their ancestral villages are remembered. The significance of these places can be observed when at the *ʿid al-Aḏḏha (kore duul)*, the Feast of Sacrifice and the most important Islamic holiday, Nubians living in the Sudanese or Egyptian cities or in the diaspora return to their home villages whenever possible, also making day trips to the submerged homeland near Aswan.

Language is an important marker of identity. For the Dongolawi Ṣābir ‘Ābdīn, who designates himself as a researcher of Nubian identity, identity consists of language, customs, traditions, and cultural history. For Thābit Zāki, a Mattokki with high language proficiency, a Nubian is recognised through language, the place he comes from and the way he behaves.²⁶⁰ Both speak of ‘Nubian’ instead of ‘Andaandi’/‘Dongolawi’ and ‘Mattokki’/‘Kenzi’, as increasingly both groups regard themselves as part of

²⁵⁸ JOSEPH 2004: 10.

²⁵⁹ ERRINGTON 2008: 163: “The organicist tradition of thought about language ... is still a strong and well-travelled means for associating language with a place, identity, and history, and for asserting rights to territories.”

²⁶⁰ Ṣābir ‘Ābdīn 2009, p.c. Interestingly, his Andaandi language skills are minimal. – Thābit Zāki 2011, p.c.

a wider ‘Nubian’ community, a development that began more than seventy years ago.²⁶¹

The German anthropologist Andreas Kronenberg simplifies the matter when talking about a “common language” as an identity marker of a member of the Nubian group. However, he correctly associates Nubian identity with Sudanese identity.²⁶² Even in Egypt some Nubians prefer watching Sudanese TV.

If identity is defined by language, what about Nubians whose parents did not transmit a Nubian language? What identity will be anticipated by the younger generation when language shift has resulted in only Arabic being spoken, even in the Nubian villages? Some Nubian intellectuals face this question and put it straightforwardly: Will we remain Nubians or will we become Arabs?

A few bilingual Nubians already regard themselves as Arabs. Some Mattokki present an oral history claiming that they came from the Arabian Peninsula (i.e. the East), moved into Egypt, then onward to Dongola, took over the government, learnt the Nubian language and then returned to southern Egypt. By contrast, other Nubians whose parents did not transmit their Nubian language to their offspring very strongly identify as Nubians. That may be an outcome from the Dongolawi Nubians’ former understanding of what constituted a nomadic ‘Arab’ who was easily designated as someone who ‘did not know’, meaning that as a nomad he did not know how to cultivate the land and was without a homeland. In contrast to such a nomadic Arab, a Nubian has a house and a homeland.²⁶³ Such a designation has not been used for the mainly non-nomadic Arabs living in the Wadi al-Arab area in Lower Nubia between the former Mattokki and Fadijja areas who were also resettled in 1963/64.

As long as the Nubian identity is uncertain, and its self-image is blurred, its language situation with respect to the Arabic language will remain uncertain,

²⁶¹ HERZOG 1957a: 6.

²⁶² KRONENBERG 1987: 389.

²⁶³ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2013, p.c.; Ordesse Hamed 2017, p.c., recommends further research on the Nubian perception of ‘homeland’.

vacillating, and tenuous.²⁶⁴ However, when a Nubian group secures its identity, its linguistic attitudes relating to Arabic will be positively adjusted – even if lexical and other kinds of loaning from Arabic continues.

Therefore, Nick Enfield’s approach “What group can be defined by their sharing cultural representation X?”²⁶⁵ may fit better for understanding Andaandi or Mattokki identity. As a result, I consider social traits, geography and language as three markers of Nubian identity, sometimes replaced by a sense of belonging to. At the markers’ boundaries there are some strong dynamic movements that influence the construction of identity which are to be distinguished from the inner ethnic consciousness and ethnic awareness:

Identity [is] the outward definition, over against others and that which is other. By contrast, ethnic awareness is the inner definition, determining that which is one’s own, the substance as it were, the content of identity.²⁶⁶

That can also be explained as:

People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are.²⁶⁷

I am one outsider whom Nubians may want to impress, at least during our first encounters. After a while Nubian research participants may feel more relaxed, especially as I offer little monetary incentives and no opportunities to get a German passport. As a result, Nubian research participants are more inclined to open up their self-perception and ethnic consciousness. Such

²⁶⁴ Cf. FELLMAN 1973: 245+248-249.

²⁶⁵ ENFIELD 2000: 47.

²⁶⁶ KALISCH 1999: 1. This dichotomy is based on the work of the Argentinian anthropologist Miguel Alberto Bartolome. In the German original: “Identität [ist] die Definition nach außen, gegenüber den Anderen und dem Anderen. Das ethnische Bewusstsein dagegen ist die Definition nach innen, die Bestimmung des Eigenen, sozusagen die Substanz, der Inhalt der Identität.”

Kalisch worked with a long-term perspective. He trained teachers in Argentina for work among non-Spanish-speaking language communities whose culture and language were in danger of falling out of use, similar to the situation in Nubia.

²⁶⁷ HOLLAND 2001: 3.

change is expressed, for instance, by myself sharing in my Nubian hosts' customary meals, instead of being offered an extravagant meal to honour me as a guest.

Other outsiders are Sudanese and Egyptian Arab government officials whose decisions necessitate a political economy²⁶⁸ and thus shape the Nubians' presentation toward the outsider and their linguistic practices. Their language and history can be an asset or a hindrance, as observed by Sondra Hale during her cultural and political studies in the Sudan since the 1960s. She visited Khartoum frequently and Wadi Halfa just before the *hijra*:

After some interviews I realized ... that Nubians may be Nubian in one situation and not in another. ... My interviews tell me that the [Nubian] elites had much to lose in the early nationalistic days if they identified themselves as Nubians first and neglected the more general label "Sudanese". However during the years of resettlement planning, it was much more advantageous to reclaim Nubian identity.²⁶⁹

I met the first kind of Nubian in 2001 when a well-intentioned Nubian medical doctor invited me to visit a high-ranking communications officer in the Sudanese army with Dongolawi background. While staying polite, the officer was not interested in language research at all. Some Nubians like him, due to their political involvement, did indeed become powerful. Political and economic power may easily lead to attempt standardisation of one's followers. A homogenous identity is easier to rule, dictate and influence. Being part of such a homogenous identity also facilitates the quest for future promotions.

By contrast, the average grassroots scholar is less powerful, less interested in political activism, less participating in the political economy, yet strongly orientated toward a Nubian identity, and therefore more vulnerable and easily at risk from more politically powerful actors. In the Sudan their situation

²⁶⁸ For the aspect of political economy I refer to DEL PERCIO, FLUBACHER, and DUCHÊNE: 2016. Probably, I am tempted to view the Nubian political economy more from a western viewpoint.

²⁶⁹ HALE 1973: 31+36.

improved shortly during the reign of the transitional Sudanese government from August 2019 until November 2021.

On a more positive note, the average grassroots scholar associates more closely with the local community.²⁷⁰ His language insights may support his reputation as someone who is really indigenous and thus able to reproduce “forms of authenticity and purity”.²⁷¹ It may result in an increase in status not within politics and economics, yet among community members.

Among the Mattokki, language and history can be exploited for tourism. Telling Nubian history has become a distinctive mark of Nubian tour guides to show that they belong to the place and thus tourists have an authentic and unique experience.

A linguistic and cultural identity that is experienced positively requires maintenance.²⁷² For Nubian grassroots scholars that is especially challenging. Based on Nubian morphological rules some define new lexemes to master the surrounding world that is changing rapidly. Examples are *nal+eddi* ‘to see’+NR meaning ‘eye glasses’ and *teeg+eddi* ‘to sit’+NR meaning ‘chair’. Since 2008 I have heard both words said first by Mattokki and then by Andaandi speakers as proof that their languages can include new objects and concepts.

Identity as a strong part of a human’s psyche may lead to conflict, as expressed by a Sudanese man in Khartoum during an interview: “In fact you can say that identity is the main cause of all wars in Sudan.”²⁷³

Therefore, I wonder if by strengthening Nubian identity animosities between Nubians who want to keep a Nubian identity and the ones who adopt a different identity due to political, economic or religious reasons, are enlarged. Therefore, I aim to connect grassroots scholars from different ethnic

²⁷⁰ The propositions stated in this paragraph require further research, especially in relation to female grassroots scholars.

²⁷¹ DEL PERCIO, FLUBACHER, and DUCHÊNE 2016: 13. A frequent topic of discussion among Nubian grassroots scholars is the purity of the Nubian language. The fewer Arabic loanwords are used the more it is considered to be pure.

²⁷² Cf. KALISCH 1999: 4.

²⁷³ INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE RIGHTS INITIATIVE 2013: 13.

backgrounds, for example from the Nile Valley and the Nuba Mountains, in order to increase their understanding of each other. Only then can the greater challenge be approached: increasing respect for diversity among people claiming to be Arabs and shattering some stereotyped assumptions about language and culture.

I conclude this chapter by presenting one aspect that strongly connects the research participants and myself: like me, the grassroots scholars I work alongside are usually interested in their intangible heritage including history. When chatting together we enjoy telling each other's past, our intangible heritage, in order to understand each other's present.²⁷⁴ We discover that our identities intersect.

Either the Mattokki originating from Lower Nubian south of the Aswan High Dam with whom I sit or their parents experienced the *hijra* where most Mattokki had to leave their home villages. Frequently I listen to their memories. Even Nubian city dwellers feel closely related to their homeland in Lower Nubia and visited it a last time just before the *hijra*. In a similar way, my mother who stems from former East Prussia lost her home village when at the age of ten she had to flee in the winter of 1945. When talking about my mother's bereavement my Nubian counterparts feel that I understand more what they went through and that I sympathise with them.

Further on, nearly all Dongolawi and Mattokki feel connected to the Nile river, enabling travel to diverse places in a mainly south-north direction. They enjoy introducing outsiders to their history. I was born and grew up in Cologne, orientated toward the river Rhine enabling travel to diverse places to the north and south, and interested in my intangible heritage, introducing English groups as a Cologne Cathedral Guide to German history and culture. When we sit together and do *wanasa* about Nubia and Cologne, when some of the Nubians talk in German and I in Andaandi or Mattokki instead of in Arabic and some Nubians do not understand me due to having already shifted

²⁷⁴ Cf. FABIAN 2014: 92.

to Arabic, our identities begin to merge and a sense of communality is created, for we are first and foremost human beings.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ BOURKE (2014: 5) was beneficial in understanding my position in where and why bonding occurred in my research.

3. Proverbs

Archer Taylor, from 1931 until his death in 1973, and Wolfgang Mieder, from 1971 onward, can be considered to have undertaken the most comprehensive studies on proverbs. Taylor's definition of the term 'proverb' has been frequently repeated and applied in other research:

The definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking. ... An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. ... Let us be content with recognizing that a proverb is a saying current among the folk.²⁷⁶

Mieder provides a more explicit definition:

A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form which is handed down from generation to generation.²⁷⁷

As Nubians originate from a region where Semitic languages are prevalent an explanation about the Semitic term for a proverb fits: "It will suffice to say that the most canvassed explanation of *māšāl* [proverb] is 'sovereign saying' or 'word of power'."²⁷⁸ The Arabic lexeme *matal* implies a proverb's impact in a similar way.

The first time I encountered the significance of proverbs in the Sudan was during a visit to the home of a Northern Sudanese studying German. He stressed his German language skills by including in the conversation as many German proverbs as possible.

²⁷⁶ Quoted from MURPHY 1998: xxii; and HANSFORD 2003: 58. Taylor first published the quote in 1962 in 'The Proverb and an Index to the Proverb'.

²⁷⁷ MIEDER 2004: 3. Mieder is the editor of the journal 'Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship', published since 1984. – The July 2022 edition of Proverbium still carries articles from Mieder; see: hrcak.srce.hr/en/broj/21886 (last accessed on 29 November 2022).

²⁷⁸ MCKANE 1985: 24.

One Mattokki calls proverbs “the highest level of talking.”²⁷⁹ This chapter will provide some reasons why this statement should be taken seriously.

3.1. Environment of Proverbs

Many a proverb has a long history, moves across boundaries, is transferred between cultures and becomes known globally due to widespread similarities of some sociocultural traits:

The oldest recorded proverb in the world was written in Sumerian, a king advising his son, reminding him about the “old proverb”, “The hasty bitch gave birth to blind young.” The proverb made it to Greece, which then passed it on to Latin, and just after AD 1500 a collection of proverbs in Latin spread it all over Europe. It is documented in English (a couple centuries back it was used more than now), German, Bulgarian, French, Portuguese, and other Euro languages. It is also known in Iraqi Arabic and Turkish. Though in some languages the animal is a cat, instead of a dog. I have found it in published pieces from three languages of Ethiopia, one from Afghan/Pakistan border, and one from Nigeria (!). ... I have found evidence of it in Dari (Eastern Persian).²⁸⁰

One Dongolawi confirmed the antiquity of Nubian proverbs: “This is the language of the people of long ago.”²⁸¹ Due to their long history proverbs form part of a community’s intangible heritage, overcoming “colonial and neo-colonial forces that acted against [one’s people’s] identity”.²⁸²

An ancient source describes the reason and benefit of proverbs:

[P]roverbs [are] for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing

²⁷⁹ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2022, p.c.

²⁸⁰ Pete Unseth 2017, p.c. by email. Cf. MCKANE 1985: 51-150 who discusses Pharaonic Egyptian proverbs; MCKANE 1985: 151-208 Babylonian and Assyrian proverbs There are similarities to contemporary proverbs although quite a few (more than in this collection) are instructions in the imperative.

²⁸¹ Manal from Lebeb 2015, p.c. She was born in 1982.

²⁸² MUBANGIZI 2017: 12.

what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young – let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.²⁸³

Therefore, one Ethiopian philosopher rightly wonders that “[b]ut little attempt has been made to study African proverbs as a tool of knowledge production.”²⁸⁴

When uttered by the wrong person, proverbs have a negative effect:

Like a lame man’s legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. ... Like a thornbush in a drunkard’s hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.²⁸⁵

That leads to the question why proverbs are employed. Mieder explains the benefits of proverbs in relation to society:

Proverbs fulfil the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs.²⁸⁶

That is similar to one Sudanese researcher, to whom proverbs “are related to and reflect the value system of a particular community.”²⁸⁷ As a result, proverbs assume a propensity for order, normativity and conformity in society. A proverb “recapitulate[s] and reproduce[s] established cultural values” and “enact[s] traditional authority.”²⁸⁸ At the same time, due to varied interpretations of metaphors it also offer some flexibility regarding these norms.

²⁸³ Holy Bible: New International Version; Proverbs 1:2-5 The dating of the book of Proverbs ranges between 10th century BC and 700 BC; see: DILLARD and LONGMAN 1995.

²⁸⁴ MUBANGIZI 2017: 1.

²⁸⁵ Holy Bible: New International Version; Proverbs 26:7+9.

²⁸⁶ MIEDER 2004: 1.

²⁸⁷ AHMED S. AL-SHAHI 1972: 87. A definition of the term ‘value’ is offered by ENGELKE (2018: 86): “what it means to organize one’s life and actions in accordance with certain ideas”.

²⁸⁸ GODDARD 2009: 103.

Proverbs are stimulating and convincing, more so than plain speech. The uttering of a proverb is a performance, the speaker of a proverb an actor, as in one of Chinua Achebe's novels:

Having spoken plainly so far, Okoye said the next half a dozen sentences in proverbs. Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.²⁸⁹

Coming from different backgrounds, each speaker needs to be creative to apply the proverb to a situation.²⁹⁰ It is “never for the first time.”²⁹¹ The ritualistic style of the communication is “more or less sharply differentiated from more mundane interaction.” Communication by proverbs “involves an aesthetic component that is available for evaluation by an audience”.²⁹²

Metaphors in proverbs ensure that the audience listens attentively to the performer. They are “language pictures based on a relationship of similarity between two objects”²⁹³ or “analogies of life”.²⁹⁴ While a metaphor “may initially present a barrier to understanding”, later “it throws a brilliant light on the situations which it fits.”²⁹⁵ The meaning is “deliver[ed] ... in the interplay of juxtaposed associations”²⁹⁶ as “an extended succession of intertextually linked recontextualisations”.²⁹⁷

²⁸⁹ From ACHEBE 1958's novel 'Things fall Apart'.

²⁹⁰ Anne Storch 2022, p.c.

²⁹¹ BAUMAN 2004: 8; based on Schechner 1985. *Between Theater and Anthropology*.

²⁹² Both quotes from BUCHOLTZ and HALL 2004: 380. While not mentioning them explicitly their description also fits proverbs.

²⁹³ BUBMANN 1983: 322; in the German original: “sprachliche Bilder, die auf einer Ähnlichkeitsbeziehung zwischen zwei Gegenständen bzw. Begriffen beruhen.” BARTLOTTI (2000: 1-26) follows this line.

²⁹⁴ From SCHLESKE (2010); based on the German artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

²⁹⁵ MCKANE 1985: 24.

²⁹⁶ LANIAK 2006: 33.

²⁹⁷ BAUMAN 2004: 8.

The performance of a proverb offers a way of passing on values, attitudes, behavioural expectations, and aspects of identity that are generally agreed upon in a given society, as in verbal communication among Spanish-speaking immigrants in the context of the United States, where proverbs are used

for didactic purposes, the regulation of social relationships, child rearing, cultural identification (ethnicity).²⁹⁸

It becomes an advice geared toward a member of society who is unsure about the society's norms or even deviates from it. Therefore, it is predominantly the middle-aged or elderly community members who employ proverbial wisdom to teach the coming generations, not just their own children and grandchildren, as upbringing and socialisation is a communal task. Hence, speakers more likely present a parental perspective, their hopes and their disappointments. It supports the community's younger members in their process of personal growth and socialisation, giving the community the necessary stability to survive and to flourish.²⁹⁹

Even marginalized people when communicating their opinions, standing up for their principles, and providing a rationale for defending their own points of view get a hearing through creatively adapting a proverb to a certain situation, deploying it and thus rationalizing their conduct. They demonstrate an understanding of the workings of a culture and thereby receive "opportunities to interrogate hegemony".³⁰⁰ In other words, the performance of a proverb may resist attempts at exercising power, and instead increase the speaker's status. The speaker becomes more valued and trusted, maybe even exercising influence or power over other members of the community who are lacking proverbial wisdom.

Those whose comprehension and application of proverbs has become exceptional are regarded by the community as knowledgeable or wise people. President Yuri Museveni of Uganda. "practices this [proverbs] to introduce

²⁹⁸ MIEDER 2004: 108.

²⁹⁹ Based on a presentation from Solange Mekamgoum (2021, unpublished) about "Understanding the Ngemba socialization system". Ngemba is an ethnicity from West Cameroon. She concluded: "Proverbs contain the people's philosophy."

³⁰⁰ MORGAN 2004: 5.

sense of humour and make his speeches interesting and less boring,”³⁰¹ indicating his communicative competence.

As proverbs are mainly passed on in non-formal settings not everybody considers proverbs as part of civilisation (Ar.: *ḥadāra*).³⁰² However, it should not be ridiculed.³⁰³ By including the Nubian community in the research, some members increasingly realise the value of their own proverbs and culture. These non-formal settings provide the best possible environment for acquiring the kind of knowledge and wisdom favoured by Southern Theory:

we must learn to recognize that different groups may... possess ways of knowing that, although different from our own, may be every bit as valuable and worthwhile as those to which we are accustomed.³⁰⁴

In my opinion this kind of knowledge not only “may be” but indeed is “every bit as valuable”. As researchers rarely grasp the multiple facets of a proverb, its appreciation outside the ethnic community may remain limited.

Proverbs may also have the opposite effect, as one Igbo proverb expresses:³⁰⁵

A tūrù ilu kà ò gbà onyē nzūzū ghāìì.

Proverbs are used to confuse stupid people.

If one proverb is countered with another one that encourages an opposite behaviour, and there are these kinds of proverbs as human wisdom is quite complex, both sides may end up in an impasse.

Alternatively, proverbs “impose a kind of veil which prevents direct communication”.³⁰⁶ They are straight forward and to the point in places

³⁰¹ ATHIAAN MAJAK MALOU 2014.

³⁰² As discussed with Khottary Oraby 2014, p.c. He is a university lecturer who would like every Egyptian to accept proverbs as part of civilisation. – Nubian research participants do not remember that proverbs were used in schools attended by Nubian children.

³⁰³ Cf. CHESTERTON 2006[1985]: 253: “Any lawyer will tell you that uneducated witnesses are much better than educated witnesses, because they have not been elaborately educated to see what is not there.”

³⁰⁴ REAGAN 2010: 3.

³⁰⁵ PENFIELD 1983: 119; proverb 67. With slightly simplified orthography.

³⁰⁶ FINNEGAN 1970: 412.

where direct verbal communication is frowned upon. Without proverbs the audience may easily interpret advice or some kind of criticism as impolite, insulting, or dishonouring, resulting in a strong counter-reaction.³⁰⁷

The message of a proverb does not originate within the performer. There is no “individual authorship”; instead a “group mind” or “folk mind”.³⁰⁸ It is part of the community’s “cultural memory”,³⁰⁹ “the voice of the age-old authority ... of a particular society”.³¹⁰ It is based on an “informal, yet controlled, oral tradition” that echoes the consciousness and identity of a community at large where the proverb is known and employed. The “[c]ontrols [are] exercised by the community.”³¹¹

Due to the societal influence and even more due to the value of the elders’ wisdom the message related through a proverb is considered trustworthy, and the advice or criticism taken seriously. While their uninterpreted meaning is not necessarily ‘true’ their propositional content is regarded as ‘truthful’ by the particular community, or at least the majority of it:

To some African ethnic groups proverbs are not explained but rather they are self-explanatory. ... In fact, proverbs in a nutshell communicate truth. Truth is sometimes bitter and can be corrupted by logical grammatical usage in language. Nevertheless proverbs spare the corruption of truth.³¹²

³⁰⁷ Cf. NORDENSTAM (1968: 121-122, quoting one of his Northern Sudanese students): The Northern Sudanese “are good people, but they don’t know any kind of forgiveness when their pride is hurt.” I would add self-respect to pride.

³⁰⁸ FINNEGAN 1970: 16+21. A possible individual authorship is discussed in MIEDER 2015.

³⁰⁹ JOSEPH 2004: 35.

³¹⁰ SALZMANN 2007: 289.

³¹¹ Both quotes from BAILEY 1995: 7.

³¹² AUGUSTINE (no date) from Tanzania. The Fadijja MAHER HABBAB (2022: xix) puts this quote at the beginning of his book about Fadijja/Mahas proverbs. It shows the importance of the term ‘truth’ for Nubians.

Many philosophers from the Greek up to Jacques Derrida have dealt with the term ‘truth’ and questioned truth claims as John B. Thompson (in BOURDIEU 1991: 8-9). By contrast, a strong current in African scholarship pleads for a universalist intuition

One Zaghawa proverb warns to be careful when giving advice and correcting:

If you want to tell the truth, put a stick beside you.³¹³

The reason for being careful is expressed in a Sudanese Arabic proverb:

Truth is bitter.³¹⁴

While in the Sudan “proverbs ... appear ... persistently in his [a Sudanese’s] conversation in relation to the changing circumstances of his ... life”,³¹⁵ not every African language offers proverbs as a means of communication: “... there are apparently few or no proverbs among the Nilotic peoples.”³¹⁶

I close by presenting my own definition: A proverb is rooted in local sociocultural traits, passing on wisdom and knowledge of the folk. It is short

that of course needs some kind of common truth, and against an all-out relativism, for example in human rights (cf. OYOWE 2014). This thesis does not enter that philosophical discussion. Instead, I point to BOTZ-BORNSTEIN (2014), a lecturer of philosophy from the West at Kuwait University, and in a position to bridge Middle Eastern Muslim and western secular perceptions of truth in a meaningful way.

Also SANNEH (2008: 140), a lecturer of history and theology from West Africa at Yale University, bridged the divide, alas the other way round. He writes: “Without some sense of objective truth people will become totally imprisoned in subjective relativism.”

Similar, for my Muslim counterparts as well as for myself as a practising Christian ‘truth’ is an integral part of our faiths, preventing rampant relativism (cf. HELM 1990).

In the following, I will mainly use the term ‘truth’ (*alee* in Andaandi and Mattokki) in a non-philosophical sense as applied in everyday speech, in Nubian society or in proverbs: “By moral truth we mean norms and practices believed by a people to uphold their values as a people.” (Nigerian scholar Rita Mebitaghan 2013, p.c.) When reproducing the term ‘truth’ in the literal translation, the interpretative plane and in quotes I show respect toward the values of the ethnicities the thesis talks about.

³¹³ SULEIMAN OSMAN 2006: 9. Zaghawa is a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in Western Sudan and Eastern Chad.

³¹⁴ SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 357.

³¹⁵ TRIMINGHAM 1949: 21.

³¹⁶ FINNEGAN 1970: 389.

and concise, optimally relevant,³¹⁷ has a minimal recognisable unit (kernel), lacks a specific author. Its meaning is flexible, depending on the situational context. It is typically performed in a non-formal setting in discourse with an audience.

3.2. Proverbs and Identity

Salwa Ahmed from the Sudan whose research on proverbs I will analyse later, writes:

[b]y studying proverbs, we can understand the mentality of a given society.³¹⁸

However, how do we know that a certain society really behaves as stated in their proverbs? Proverbs may present a vision that an ethnicity would like to achieve or would like to be known for. Proverbs and the cultural attributes they enforce may help us to comprehend more their understanding of identity:

Cultural attributes only become significant as markers of ethnic identity when a group deems them to be *necessary*, or socially effective, for such purposes. Thus, particular cultural attributes ... may be constructed or deconstructed, ...³¹⁹

The lengthiest research on proverbs and identity that I attested concludes toward its end:

... there is a relationship between folklore, in particular, proverbs, and a group's sense of ethnic and/or Islamic identity, ... Proverbs communicate these "shared understandings" of Pashtun identity.³²⁰

In his thesis, Leonard N. Bartlotti describes especially 'Pashtunness' in relation to Islam. A "consciousness of Islamic identity" is part of the ethnic

³¹⁷ BLAKEMORE 2002: 169, a professor in Linguistics at the University of Salford UK, defines 'optimally relevant' as "the utterance is relevant enough for it to be worth the hearer's efforts to process it."

³¹⁸ SALWA AHMED 2005: 194

³¹⁹ MAY 2004: 40.

³²⁰ BARTLOTTI 2000: 5-357-358.

and “group consciousness”³²¹ in an ethnicity where even proverbs reflect its religious background.

The extensive insight Bartlotti gained into Pashtun culture is exemplified by his discovery regarding earlier published Pashtun proverb collections where “Tair intentionally left out certain obscene proverbs from his published 2-volume collection”,³²² hiding aspects of culture that should not become public.

As for my studies, some insiders may want to restrict the outsider’s proverbial knowledge or understanding of their proverbs in order to create a certain identity. The principle of *sutera* closely knits the Nubian community together establishing boundaries in their portrayal.

Only underlying norms and beliefs that have been accepted by a significant part of a speech community turn into proverbs. If in a less egalitarian society dominant members or a new elite were engineering sayings, with the marginalized and subordinated ones made to “accept these views as ‘common sense’, reasonable and ‘natural’”,³²³ the dominant members are confronted with the conservative nature of proverbs, causing such an approach of engineering sayings to take a long time. One example is a saying introduced by the Communist elite in the former German Democratic Republic in 1975: ‘Ohne Gott und Sonnenschein, fahren wir die Ernte ein’.³²⁴ While it became well known it never became proverbial and lost its meaning when the government was toppled in 1989.

That does not mean that the majority of a well-connected speech community obeys the norms laid down by their proverbs; the majority only agrees that these norms and values are the best way to live by and, at least in theory, it is committed to behave accordingly. One such norm is the advice of working hard. Using the same set of proverbs ensures that all community members carry an equal weight of the work load.

³²¹ BARTLOTTI 2000: 1-39 and 2000: 2-70.

³²² BARTLOTTI 2000: 3-155. Tair is a local collector of Pashtun proverbs.

³²³ MORGAN 2004: 5.

³²⁴ English translation: ‘Don’t need God and don’t need sun to help us bring the harvest in.’

As proverbs emphasise the more positive aspects of a community they are a means of defining it, or even distancing it from other ones, especially when one's community lives among an economically and politically stronger dominant group. Mentioning Nubian proverbs allows Egyptian Nubians to demonstrate that their behaviour is ethical and not backward.

One further bibliographies that discuss proverbs and identity relates to Palestinian proverbs:

Passed down from generation to generation, these proverbs have endured the test of time and have come to reflect and influence our present cultural identity just as they have for generations before us.³²⁵

All these quotes point to proverbs defining the identity of a group, less so the identity of individual group members.

3.3. Collections of Proverbs

Collecting proverbs has become a science in its own right, named paremiography.³²⁶ A few other proverb collections have been beneficial for my studies, among them five by researchers of Sudanese origin, and two by Westerners working in Pakistan and Egypt. I begin with the collections of Sudanese origin, ordered by date of publication:

A small collection of twenty-nine Sudanese Arabic proverbs from Nuri village near Karima which is upstream from the Dongola Reach is found in AHMED S. AL-SHAHI (1972) who stems from the Sudan. They deal with the 'other'.

MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR (1978) is a Sudanese Mahas Nubian who immigrated to Egyptian Nubia. He collected 291 Mahas proverbs and published them in Arabic at the Institute of African and Asian Studies at the University of Khartoum. Mohamed Haroun Kafi, also from the Sudan, provided an unpublished translation into English in 1980. In it he omits word-for-word translations, focusing on the interpretative plane. Unfortunately, its presentation lacks any systematic order.

³²⁵ NASSER M ISLEEM 2009: v.

³²⁶ MIEDER 2004: xii. This contrasts with paremiology, the study of proverbs.

The translator discovered that some proverbs reflect Egyptian culture, meaning most probably Egyptian non-Nubian culture. Some of the proverbs parallel Andaandi proverbs, others Mattokki proverbs. Due to Mohamed Haroun Kafi's native language not being English and some difficulties in understanding his text, I make slight adjustments when quoting his work.

SALWA AHMED's (2005) PhD thesis is a major work on Western Sudanese Arabic proverbs. She collected about 830 proverbs. Because of being of Western Sudanese descent she was able to hear most of the proverbs in-situ. These proverbs are compared with English ones that she also heard in-situ.³²⁷ However, her thesis shows a few shortcomings:

- It is not obvious where Sudanese Colloquial Arabic (SCA) and where other registers of Arabic are used. By looking at the language data it is assumed that in most instances (except when proverbs are directly taken from the *Qur'ān*) she employs SCA.
- Proverbs are not numbered correctly. Some proverbs occur twice (e.g. proverbs 12 and 463), other proverbs change their numbers during the course of the thesis (e.g. 179 becomes 175). Similar proverbs are not grouped together (e.g. 491 and 565).
- The Sudanese Arabic text written in Arabic characters and its Roman transcription are not always coherent (e.g. proverb 29).
- There is no mention or discussion of the (non-)existence of 'obscene' proverbs. An insider could offer special insight.
- The bibliography does not contain all the sources quoted in the main body of the PhD thesis (as the Riazi quote).
- Being a Muslim Salwa Ahmed seems to have been under pressure to justify Islam especially when dealing with gender roles and issues.³²⁸

³²⁷ As at Hyde Park Speaker's corner in London.

³²⁸ As in her chapter: "Marriage and Women": "However, (mis)treatment of women is governed by customs and tradition, not by Islam's view." (SALWA AHMED 2005: 89)

SULEIMAN OSMAN (2006)³²⁹ in his internet publication examines 70 proverbs and 23 idiomatic phrases of the Zaghawa language that he collected from about 50 speakers. Zaghawa belongs to the Nilo-Saharan language phylum like Andaandi and Mattokki, and is spoken in Western Sudan.

The compilation of Zaghawa proverbs is tiny in comparison to other collections and therefore covers only a few semantic domains. Still, it applies proverbs to situations not covered by Andaandi proverbs like war, that is a reality for the Zaghawa, at least in their homelands.

MUNA ZAKI grew up in Khartoum. She pictures her grandmother and the many proverbs down the years she told while “sitting in the lamplit yard telling a story once the chores were finished.” Proverbs were part of an oral performance calling “for virtues that encourage solidarity, peace, and coherence within society.”³³⁰ ZAKI and WYATT (2015) list their favourite 560 Sudanese Arabic proverbs, sometimes including stories that are behind these wisdom sayings.

John Lewis (also Johann Ludwig) BURCKHARDT (2012[1875]) collected Arabic proverbs from “a native of Cairo, who lived, it is said, early in the last [19th] century, but never acquired a very high reputation. The translator [Burckhardt] found those Proverbs written upon nine or ten leaves in the commonplace book of a sheikh.”³³¹ Burckhardt wrote the book in 1817, and first published it in 1830. It offers a plain proverb collection with no cultural analysis.³³²

Leonard N. BARTLOTTI (2000) deals with the Pashtun living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. No exact number of proverbs is given, he speaks of “approximately 1000 Pashto proverbs (from a 12,000 text database).”³³³ The

³²⁹ While the article omits the year of publication it was later confirmed by the author. The latest bibliographical entry is from 2005, meaning that the article was written shortly after the signing of the Naivasha Peace Protocol.

³³⁰ Both quotes from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: 1.

³³¹ BURCKHARDT 2012[1875]: iii. Here “sheikh” means a religious leader.

³³² GOITEIN (1966: 372) adds: “It is significant that Burckhardt found many items [proverbs] listed by his predecessor no longer in use in his time.”

³³³ BARTLOTTI 2000: iii. For more insight into Bartlotti’s studies see subchapter 3.2.

Pashtun are Muslim, like the Nubians. Bartlotti built up long-standing friendships before he set out to write his PhD thesis, like myself. However, unlike myself, Bartlotti did not need to begin his research by collecting proverbs. He was privileged in being able to use a large scholarly Pashtun proverb collection already available to a western audience,³³⁴ and could focus on analysing proverbs and Pashtun identity.

3.4. Proverbs among Andaandi and Mattokki speakers

Andaandi and Mattokki are two languages that provide many proverbs. By contrast, no Andaandi or Mattokki jokes or curse words are attested. Among the Dongolawi a joke or a curse is uttered in Arabic.³³⁵

Proverbs are considered as a kind of *igid* ‘tale’.³³⁶ In Andaandi proverbs are *meselad*, *masaled*, or *masalaad*, in Mattokki *masal*. The words are derived from Arabic مَثَل *mesel*, or *masal*.³³⁷ No specific Andaandi or Mattokki lexeme for ‘wise saying’ is attested.³³⁸ In Andaandi, a proverb is described as

ΔΟΥΛΙΝ ΩΕΡΕ

duulin weere.

The saying of the elders/ancestors.³³⁹

That is similar to a grandmother who concluded a proverb by uttering the phrase:

³³⁴ BARTLOTTI 2000: 87.

³³⁵ Sayed Bushrab 2011, p.c. He describes the situation about 50 years ago. When traveling with the ‘Dongolawi Association for Heritage and Culture’ during their performances which were held in Nubian they told some jokes, always in Arabic.

³³⁶ Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.

³³⁷ In WEHR’s (1980: 891) Arabic – English dictionary the meaning is “something similar”. – HASAN M. EL-SHAMY 1980: xlv writes *mathāl*.

³³⁸ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2010, p.c. That is similar to Tangale in Northern Nigeria (JUNGRAITHMAYR 2006: XVIII).

³³⁹ ‘Abd al-‘Dā’im ‘Anbar 2017, p.c. Variant is *duulincin weere*. In Mattokki the GEN clitic is dropped: *duuli weere* (Muhammad Şubḥi 2023, p.c.).

IN ΔΟΥΛΙΝΟΙ ΩΕCΑΝ ΤΑΝΝΑΝ.

in duulinci weesan tannan.

That is what the elders/ancestors said.³⁴⁰

TAHA A. TAHA (2011) heard similar phrases as: “as my grandfather used to say”, “as old people would say”, or “as my grandmother says”. Both Andaandi and Mattokki have proverbs about the significance and wisdom of elders.³⁴¹

Alternatively, at the beginning *weekoran* ‘they said’ or *masal weebuu* ‘the proverb says’ is sufficient.³⁴²

Mattokki farmers on Elephantine Island sometimes close a proverb with:

ΑΔΑΜ ΖΑΩΩΑ ΩΕCΙΝ ΝΑΩΙΤΤΕ.

Adam Hawwa weesin nawitte.

As Adam Hawwa said.³⁴³

The farmer Adam Hawwa originated from Elephantine Island and moved to West Aswan. He knew very many proverbs and was accordingly considered a very wise man.³⁴⁴

Mattokki sometimes open the saying of a proverb with:

ΜΑCΑΛΩΕΡΚΙ ΩΕCΑ.

masalweerki weesa.

They said a proverb.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁰ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli (2011, p.c.) about his grandmother. *tannan* is used in the southern Dongola Reach; in the north *taran* is preferred (cf. ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4232).

³⁴¹ Cf. A16.6, A22.4, A22.5, and M16.4.

³⁴² Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c. – Cf. Bafut (Cameroon) where the introductory phrase is: “our fathers used to say ...” (MFOYAM 2014: 3).

³⁴³ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2012, p.c.

³⁴⁴ Note that his father’s name remains unknown. Hawwa (Eve) is his mother’s name.

³⁴⁵ Khālīd Karār 2012, p.c.

ΜΑCΑΛΑΔ Ἀ ΩΕ ΝΑΩΙΚΚΕ.

masalaad aa wee nawikke.

As the proverb says.³⁴⁶

Literally, in Andaandi proverbs are not uttered, but beaten:

ΜΑCΑΛΑΔΤΙ ΔΟΜ!

masalaadti jom!

Beat the proverb!

jom

expresses a motion, not necessarily involving the whole body, that causes changes to its object. The action is usually performed once, in contrast to *tukki* where the hitting is repeated. Meanings are ‘to beat, hit, strike, pierce, bite, reach (a place), hack (with a hoe), chop (with an axe), flog (with a whip)’. Rarely it means ‘to utter’,³⁴⁷ ‘to make impression’, ‘to play (a musical instrument)’,³⁴⁸ or ‘to paint’.³⁴⁹

⇒

Say a proverb!

In Mattokki, *jom* can also occur in connection with a proverb:

ΜΑCΑΛΓ Ἀ ΔΟΜΡΑ.

masalg aa jomra.

They are beating a proverb.³⁵⁰

Some proverbs are only known among women as confirmed by one Mattokki who observed that some proverbs were only known by his wife but not to him.³⁵¹ Women may use proverbs more than men because they are more around children³⁵² which underlines the proverbs’ educational purpose.

³⁴⁶ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi and Asmaa A. Kenawy 2022, p.c.

³⁴⁷ As in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 90.

³⁴⁸ Cf. MASSENBAACH 1933: 181.

³⁴⁹ As some Andaandi speakers.

³⁵⁰ Aḥmad ‘Ali 2024, p.c.

³⁵¹ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2017, p.c.

³⁵² ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān 2016, p.c.

Everywhere in Nubia, familiarity and proper use of proverbs was considered a proof that someone was talented. Such a person had the proverbial and the cultural competence.³⁵³

In Andaandi, a wise man and a proverb/wise saying are related.³⁵⁴

ḠĀMIΔ TENN BAΦΦĪΔ MAΛΛE MACAΛĀΔOYN.

Haamid tenn banynyiid malle masalaadun.

Hamid, all his talking is proverbs.

ḠĀMIΔ TENN BAΦΦĪΔ MACAΛĀNΔIN.

Haamid tenn banynyiid masalaandin.

Hamid, his talking consists of proverbs.

⇒ Hamid is a wise man. [interpretative plane]

When discussing the origin of proverbs, lyrics and poetry are named as possible sources,³⁵⁵ as the late Ṣidqī Aḥmad Silīm from West Sehel who is credited with having sung Arab texts translated into Mattokki, also using Arabic music, and the late Ḥasan Ghazūli from Gurte who sang Mattokki music. Ṣidqī Aḥmad was not allowed to marry his paternal uncle's daughter and died at the early age of 35.³⁵⁶ His love songs reflect his disappointment. Proverbs M8.2, M12.1, M13.1, and M23.7 are part of his songs.

One song by Ḥasan Ghazūli, with lyrics by the Mattokki poet 'Abdu Mīrghani,³⁵⁷ is based on proverbs:

tenn arid menillu zool tubroog aa jomna?

essi jabir tallemeekin, baag aa duurna?

³⁵³ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2013, p.c. – I.e. the competence to know how to apply a proverb, and the competence to know the cultural component and the context of a proverb.

³⁵⁴ Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.; and others.

³⁵⁵ Nubians of the Nubian *turāth* [heritage] Club in Cairo 2012, p.c. In general this thesis does not attempt to discover the geographical origin of a proverb.

³⁵⁶ Faḍl Aḥmad 2016, p.c.

³⁵⁷ Born 1932, lived in the informal Cairene suburb of Bulaq Dakruur, died 2008. A minority of Mattokki claim that the lyrics are from Sha'bān 'Awaḍ from Girshe, like the Mattokki poet 'Abd al-Min'am 'Awaḍ from Merwaw.

seringi ewirel, illegi joorkoomnu.

essi duul umurro xoor aagkoomnu.

The proverbs refer to are M5.2, M3.4, M5.3, and M1.2 described and glossed in the next chapter. Other proverbs that appear in songs performed by Ḥasan Ghazūli are M4.6, M11.2, and M28.4. Ḥasan al-Sughayir also uses Nubian proverbs in his songs (as M24.9 and M25.9).

Most of the Mattokki I talked to claim that proverbs came first. They became more widely known through being incorporated in popular songs.³⁵⁸ The use of proverbs within popular songs is also reported from the Fadijja area.³⁵⁹

Songs are a good example of indexing. When hearing the song the proverb is remembered and vice versa.

Not every proverb is available in each Nubian village. Instead, the importance of agriculture in a village seems to correlate with the amount of proverbs in use.³⁶⁰

Finally, Andaandi proverb A18.11 is to be kept in mind:

TOKKON TOLLE MOYKKIMEN!

tokkon tolle mukkimen!

Just do not draw and drive [the boat]! – Do not sail far!

⇒ Although the meaning is clear, you try to read what is behind the lines/words. Accept words by face value.

This is opposite to the way the western mind analyses texts. A critical analysis that wants to make a collection of proverbs comprehensible can be viewed as “criticism of social values”, as the Sudanese proverbs researcher Salwa Ahmed experienced “when I was discussing the social attitudes towards women expressed in Sudanese proverbs.”³⁶¹ The requirements of the academic community have to be carefully balanced against the needs of a non-dominant society and the needs of individual local people.

³⁵⁸ The Mattokki poet ‘Abd al-Min‘am ‘Awaḍ and a few other Mattokki.

³⁵⁹ Maher Habbob 2013, p.c.

³⁶⁰ Sha‘bān Berber (2012, p.c.) presents the pre-*hijra* Mattokki village of Dakke as one example. It had a large agricultural project.

³⁶¹ SALWA AHMED 2005: 28.

3.5. Demise of Proverbs

With the increase of individualism and globalisation, and the demise of the influence and importance of local communities and non-dominant languages, a decline of local knowledge transmission can be ascertained. In the words of a Mattokki woman: In the past, most goods came from the village and were brought to the city, but today the opposite direction is predominant.³⁶² Interdependence between community members is replaced by growing independence, decreasing the value of proverbs for the functioning of society, as expressed by two Dongolawi comparing past and present: For the first one, criteria for respect have changed; before it there were proverbs, nowadays it is rote knowledge of the *Qur'ān* and the *sunna*. The second speaker observes that cultural skills are rarely transmitted from father to son. Thus, patterns of expectation do not fit anymore and the 'chain of civilization' is cut off.³⁶³

Mattokki I am in conversation with perceive similar experiences: In the past, families would have sat together in the evening and children would have listened to elderly relatives. Nowadays, satellite TV replaces such communal events. TV mixes cultures from different countries depending on which satellite channel is turned on. Celebrities from countries other than the Sudan and Egypt become the new role models for Nubian adolescents. Education and media as agents of transferring knowledge, norms, and values are substituted for family and elders as the primary institution of socialisation. It is said that formal education and university degrees turn out to be much more prevalent, as Nubian children are asked about their parents' degrees, not about their proverbial knowledge. A young person with formal education is easily inclined to consider himself as civilised and looks down on the limited geographical horizon of an elderly farmer who is a good speaker of Andaandi or Mattokki with a vast wealth of proverbs, but restricted in Arabic grammar and literacy. These days, distributing money or wielding political influence are means of becoming a valued member of society.³⁶⁴

³⁶² Khayria Mūsa 2022 p.c.

³⁶³ Among them one Dongolawi 2018, p.c., working in Saudi Arabia.

³⁶⁴ Inhabitants of Dakke 2012, p.c.; Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid 2014, p.c.; 'Amm Sali 2014, p.c.; Mother of Zīzī Şiyām 2014, p.c.; 'Abdu al-Sunni 2016, p.c.; Uthāma Farūq 2016,

When there was a marked increase of unrest in some of the Nubian resettlement villages and the former methods of reconciliation did not work, one Fadijja declared: “The word of the old people is no longer heard.”³⁶⁵ Other Mattokki voiced similar concerns.

Many Nubians observe a greater frankness and directness among the elderly generation. At the same time, older Andaandi and Mattokki speakers use proverbs more frequently than the younger generation. Does a lack of learning proverbs alter the way of verbal communication?

Nowadays, Nubians are less fixed to a geographical place. The majority of the Dongolawi reside outside of the Dongola Reach, most of the Mattokki villages were resettled in 1963/64 to an area with a very different environment than that of their homeland.³⁶⁶ The Dongola Reach and post-*hijra* Nubia continue to alter so quickly and drastically, with many Nubians also being agents of this change, that metaphors used in proverbs become obsolete. Except for a diminishing minority of Andaandi or Mattokki speakers, the cultural background of proverbs becomes unintelligible and appears outdated. New sayings do not have sufficient time to turn into generally accepted proverbs. When on top of this language shifts occurs, proverbs, related ritualism, and local knowledge tend to get lost forever. Therefore, collecting and documenting Nubian proverbs and wisdom within their context becomes the only alternative. While this may sound like a Western approach of ‘salvage anthropology’ of an Indigenous culture, such a process is also called for by Indigenous sources.

Even languages with less language shift benefit from such documentation of proverbs:

p.c. – Compare similar thoughts in HESSE (2002: 228) about the Nuba-Dawalib of Northern Kordofan.

³⁶⁵ Maher Habbob 2014, p.c.

³⁶⁶ Change of environment also led to the demise of many classical Arabic proverbs: “a great many classical proverbs may have disappeared because they used images taken from *life in the desert*, its physical features, its flora and fauna, which have become unintelligible to the majority of Arabic speaking people.” (GOTEIN 1966: 370)

Though a community may not be in immediate danger of losing their [sic!] language, one social domain that is frequently vulnerable is a community's proverbial lore, its loss being an incremental step in the loss of language and culture.³⁶⁷

Besides western influence “the arrival and impact of Islam and Christianity”³⁶⁸ is considered detrimental to “[t]he use and mastering of proverbs”. Such a statement is contradicted by the aforementioned Pashtun Muslims who value and use their proverbs very much, and the Old Testament of the Jews and Christians that includes one book dedicated entirely to proverbs.

One counter-example is a Nubian man from Dakke who speaks Mattokki to his children. This enables him to rear and educate them informally with proverbs. However, Nubians with his point of view remain a tiny minority.

In conclusion, the demise of proverbs can be interpreted as ‘linguistic poverty’; “the inability to fully access a linguistic repertoire that adequately meets the needs and aspirations of the community.”³⁶⁹

3.6. Ḥāmid Khabīr and his collection of Andaandi proverbs

Like Bartlott I was able to make use of an earlier proverb collection, however it was only available locally and less encompassing. About half of the Andaandi wise sayings and proverbs discussed in this thesis were collected by the farmer Ḥāmid Khabīr al-Shaikh from Khannaag,³⁷⁰ a village south of modern-day Dongola close to the river Nile in Northern Sudan. In the spirit of a Lebanese identity researcher who wrote “[i]t befits a book about language and identity to be more personal in nature than is the norm”³⁷¹ this most astonishing person is introduced in some detail, bearing in mind that such a prolonged description is a construction of some kind of individual identity.

³⁶⁷ UNSETH 2007: 1.

³⁶⁸ JUNGRAITHMAYR 2006: XVII.

³⁶⁹ LEWIS 2022: 244.

³⁷⁰ Some local farmers still say the non-Arabized form ‘Hannaag’.

³⁷¹ JOSEPH 2004: xi.

The information on Ḥāmid Khabīr is based on him regularly telling me about his life, other Nubians talking about him when realising that Ḥāmid Khabīr and I are good friends, and my own observations.³⁷²

After having heard about me and my research, Ḥāmid Khabīr took the initiative and left a message at the bank in Dongola where foreigners used to exchange foreign currency. Hence, when during my stay in Dongola in January 2004 I exchanged money and the bank clerk saw my name written on the receipt he passed on that message. Shortly afterwards I went to Khannaag where Ḥāmid Khabīr's four-year-old son took me to the field where his father was working. Before we talked about our research, he introduced me to his farm work. Together we raked part of a field smooth and led the goats back to their pen.

Many Nubian proverbs talk about hard-working farmers, and Ḥāmid Khabīr is one of them. Additionally he is very interested in his native language and culture; I would call him a native ethnographer. This combination enables him to present his comprehensive knowledge of the diverse Dongolawi culture that in essence has been a farming culture.

At home Ḥāmid Khabīr told me about his life. He was born in 1952. His father worked in Egypt from 1930 to 1953 where he experienced the significance of school education. Therefore he insisted on a good school education for his children, including Ḥāmid Khabīr. As a young boy he worked the waterwheel and drove the ox round to make the waterwheel turn. Later he worked in Yemen as a teacher. After his return to the Dongola Reach two Germans employed him to jointly set up a youth training centre.

Only later did I discover that Ḥāmid Khabīr's life had been tough. Teachers gave him a hard time at school. Like so many other Dongolawi of his age, he was beaten frequently at school for speaking Andaandi. He lost one of his brothers and one of his daughters in traffic accidents. His first wife's passing away in January 2009 was another severe blow.

³⁷² I am writing how Ḥāmid Khabīr became part of my life. It would be interesting to read the opposite, how I became part of Ḥāmid Khabīr's life (cf. STORCH 2019: 20). For a photo of Ḥāmid Khabīr and two of his sons, see JAEGER 2023: 125.

One of Ḥāmid Khabīr's first questions to me was: How can I teach Nubian to my children? Sometimes he offered his children financial incentives to encourage them to speak Andaandi. Like many other Dongolawi he did not seem to realise that Andaandi language transmission to children was the most beneficial way.

While working his plots of land Ḥāmid Khabīr ponders a lot about Andaandi. In 1997 he began collecting Andaandi proverbs. Before our first meeting he had written first drafts of two books, one about Nubian 'traditions', another one about Nubian wise sayings and proverbs. He was encouraged to have them typed; however, he showed me the corrections he deemed necessary before publication. At that time Ḥāmid Khabīr received help at Dongola University from Ḥasan 'Abd al-Rahīm Fadal (from Tabo) and was made a student at Karima and Dongola University that forms one university with two campuses.

We next met in December 2004. I discovered that Ḥāmid Khabīr had paid for most that related to his research himself.³⁷³ Computer typing and printing cost him 30 Euro-cent each page. Due to his travels to Khartoum where he had connected with university staff and furthered his research, his agricultural fields were behind schedule, and his income had decreased.

In February 2005 at a celebration of Dongolawi culture in the village of Urbi (south of Dongola and Khannaag) attended by Ḥāmid Khabīr his proverbs were presented for the first time to a wider Nubian audience. The organisers copied some of his wise sayings and proverbs on wallpaper and posted them at a public place. The Ministry of Culture in Dongola had been invited for the event, but did not send any representative.

In 2005 Ḥāmid Khabīr became one of the first members of the newly formed 'Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage'.

In January 2006, when Ḥāmid Khabīr wanted to have his Nubian sayings and proverbs published, his wife became very sick. So, instead of discussing his sayings and proverbs, we both sat waiting at Dongola hospital where his wife

³⁷³ In 2023 Ḥāmid Khabīr added that only Kamal Hussein and the late Farid Mekkawi supported him financially at that time. Neither of them can be considered as rich.

was being cared for. Also at other times illnesses and the limited health facilities in the Dongola Reach restricted opportunities of working together.

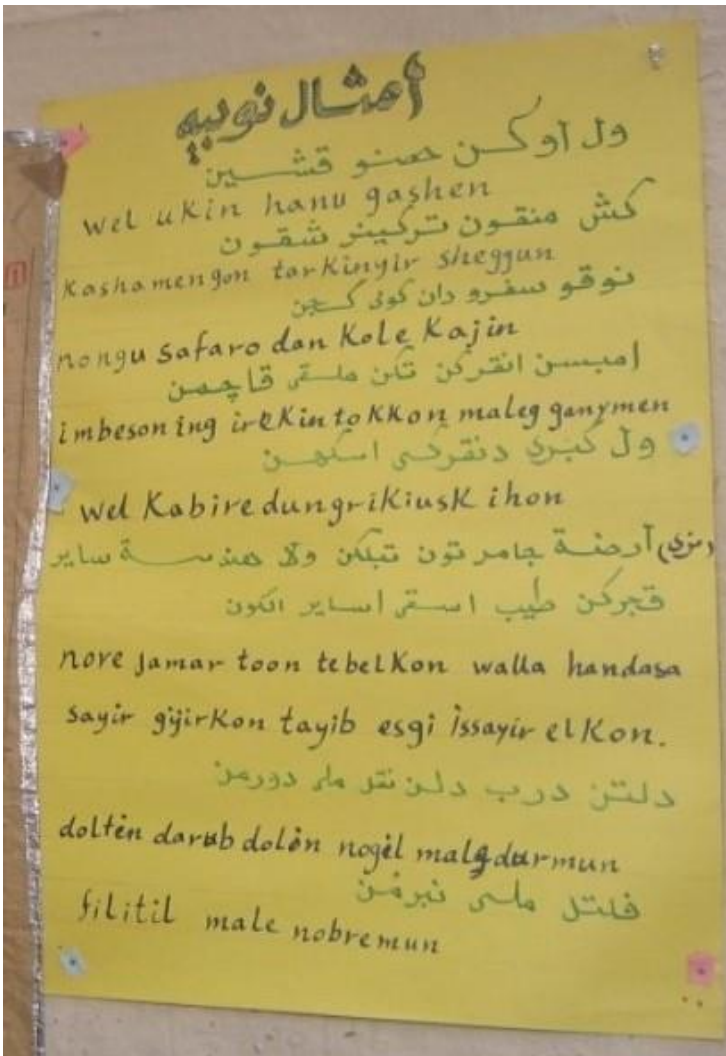


Figure 2: Proverbs in Urbi (used with permission from Janet Thomson-Dearborn, 2005)

After having received some financial aid in 2007 the first edition of Nubian sayings and proverbs was printed in Khartoum. Each proverb consists of a

proverb number, the proverb written in Arabic without diacritics (*tashkīl*) and in Roman script (assisted by Kamal Hussein), translation of Nubian words into Arabic, literal translation into Arabic, meaning in Arabic, and further explanations. The book is text-only, no visual aids are applied. The environment Ḥāmid Khabīr lived and worked in did not allow for more.

Ḥāmid Khabīr continued working on the Andaandi proverbs. In 2016, he again received financial aid from the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’ and published his second revised and extended edition, consisting of 227 sayings and proverbs, including some Nubian terms of importance for understanding Nubian sociocultural traits. In this book he does not name his sources.³⁷⁴ This time he replaced Nubian written in Roman script with Nubian written in Nubian script. Additionally, he continued writing the Nubian texts in Arabic characters, while finding it tedious. He aimed to keep closely to the orthography rules set out by the International University of Africa.

Ḥāmid Khabīr prefers to include as many proverbs as possible, even when this leads to the inclusion of some sayings that others would call idioms. Some entries consist of one word only, in this thesis listed separately in subchapter 4.34. He does not exclude proverbs due to the Nubian concept of *sutera*, a criticism brought forward by some Nubians. Altogether, I cannot determine whether Ḥāmid Khabīr had a specific agenda or consciously included/excluded some proverbs, for specific reasons. To me that does not seem likely.

When meeting regularly in 2016 shortly before publishing his second edition, Ḥāmid Khabīr explained his work to me: For him the Nubian proverbs have become “part of my blood, they go together with my blood.” He aims to pass on Nubian culture, not only to his children, but to everybody interested; and to ensure that Andaandi stays alive. However, he is aware that his goals will not be reached if there is no broad impact. He has no illusions about the readers. Nowadays, only a few Sudanese read, as reading seems to have lost its economic benefit.

³⁷⁴ ‘Abd al-‘Dā’im ‘Anbar told me about the proverbs he passed on to Ḥāmid Khabīr.

Due to outside circumstances, parts of the publication were not checked and corrected as properly as some readers would have desired. When discussing it, also in my presence, it is argued that the spelling is inconsistent, or that the Arabic meaning is incomprehensible. As many Nubians enjoy a very frank and lively discussion, they even criticise something they would have never been able to achieve.

After 2016 the internet became one of the sources for finding additional proverbs. Ḥāmid Khabīr checked whether proverbs in other languages also existed in Andaandi. Further proverbs were collected from elderly Nubians, also women, whom he accessed through his sister. These additional proverbs still remain unpublished.

Ḥāmid Khabīr's research is timely and without him might have never happened. One Dongolawi commented: "The order of life is written in this book."³⁷⁵ Due to the above described demise in proverbial knowledge his generation is probably the last one that still has access to the Nubian sayings and proverbs. Whereas during my early visits Ḥāmid Khabīr talked Andaandi naturally with other farmers of his own age (all born prior to 1955) in Khannaag, many village children (born after 1992) did not even understand it, let alone speak it. Ḥāmid Khabīr is truly "an informed insider, a participant in the society on which he comments".³⁷⁶ He has developed a "knowledge transmission pattern",³⁷⁷ someone who passes on wisdom to the next generation, of course in written form, as trading knowledge orally has significantly decreased.

Frequently in the following, Ḥāmid Khabīr's voice is constructed based on his written documents. As such insights remain limited, I am glad that since 2015 more opportunities have arisen to meet Ḥāmid Khabīr face-to-face. I benefited from investigating his manuscripts, discussing with him many of the proverbs he collected and gaining further information from his vast knowledge.

³⁷⁵ 'Awaḍ Ḥasan 2017 p.c.; referring to ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016).

³⁷⁶ HEWER 2000: 117. Cf. BLOMMAERT 2004a: 662.

³⁷⁷ LEWIS and SIMONS 2016: 23.

That leads to the question of how far Ḥāmid Khabīr uses Andaandi proverbs to construct his own identity. His interest in proverbs makes him stand out. Whereas in the past, maybe until thirty years ago, proverbial knowledge was a strong marker of belonging to a community, these days, due to environmental and cultural changes, knowing and living according to the wisdom of Nubian proverbs can construct boundaries against other members of the community for whom the world as described in the proverbs is outdated. While he himself may want to construct his identity as a person knowledgeable in Nubian culture and history his fellow villagers perceive other aspects. While admiring his proverb collection they more often discuss Ḥāmid Khabīr's life and personality.

Later Ḥāmid Khabīr was shown some acknowledgement of his consistent cultural work. After his publication he was given a post and an office at the Ministry for Culture in Dongola, alas a minor one. Since retirement income from farming his plot of land is supplemented by a small pension from his time working in the ministry.

Due to the collection of proverbs being published mainly in Arabic I assume that the Andaandi proverbs were written with a Dongolawi audience in mind who either still speak Andaandi yet are in the process of forgetting the proverbs, or who have experienced language shift while still valuing their heritage.

I have questioned my influence on Ḥāmid Khabīr's selection and editing of proverbs. He began collecting proverbs before meeting me, intending a Sudanese audience. Although he was glad when I started to translate his proverbs into English, alas at a later stage of his work, a western audience has not become his aim. Also, in my impression, he remains far too straight forward to allow himself to be influenced by an outsider. Instead, he is willing to strain a friendship in order to make his point. It is beneficial that our relationship does not hinder us to be critical of each other's work.

In 2010 I presented a first draft of my research on his proverbs to Ḥāmid Khabīr. It included the proverbs of his first edition written in Nubian script and their literal translation into English and its interpretative plane. I used this opportunity to ask him what part of my research supports Dongolawi people

most. His answer reflects his wisdom: “Taking time to greet the Dongolawi people.”

Also, after publishing the second edition, Ḥāmid Khabīr continues to be thankful for my regular visits to Khannaag that encourage him. His modest desire is to be able to travel once in his life to Egypt and to own one office room where he can sort his writings and his books.

3.7. Egyptian Nubian students and their collection of proverbs

At the beginning it was more difficult to collect Mattokki proverbs than Andaandi ones. In the opinion of one Mattokki, the Mattokki forgot their proverbs after leaving Lower Nubia and resettling around Kom Ombo.³⁷⁸ Only after the January 25 revolution in 2011 Mattokki started to remember their proverbs more vividly, as if a shroud had been lifted.

In 1996, three years before I began researching Nubian topics, twenty Nubian students of the Faculty of Social Work, South Valley University, Aswan, had been recruited by Dr. Muddathir Salim to complete a Nubian Ethnological Survey largely restricted to the resettlement villages around Kom Ombo. Over a period of several months they documented Egyptian Nubian culture and heritage, among them proverbs, tales, lullabies, wedding customs, Muslim saint’s *mūlids* and mourning songs. Models of Nubian clothes, jewellery and houses have been formed and shaped. Their work remains uncompleted and unpublished. Heading up the students was Maher Habbob, a Fadijja Nubian from Tūmās wa ‘Afya (near Esna). He was born in 1965, after the *hijra*. Being most interested in Nubian folklore and history, he authored and co-authored articles.³⁷⁹

When hearing about my interest in Andaandi proverbs Maher Habbob forwarded 76 Mattokki proverbs collected by two female students from Umbarakaab, a northern Mattokki village, during the ethnological survey,

³⁷⁸ Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz 2010, p.c.

³⁷⁹ Maher Habbob 2009+2020, p.c. – MAHER HABBOb (2004) describes the former weekly post boat, the *bosta*, that prior to the *hijra* connected the Nubian villages and Aswan, and the results of the Nubian *hijra*. MAHER HABBOb (2014) offers a collection of Fadijja proverbs in Arabic.

written on two sheets of paper. The background of the Mattokki proverb collection is diametrically opposite to the Andaandi one. While Ḥāmid Khabīr and I are friends, I have never met the two Mattokki proverb collectors; even their names are unknown to me. As usually the name is the first piece of information required to establish one's identity that puts me in a difficult position for analysing the two Mattokki women's involvement. Instead, I have to adhere to other determining factors, such as their village of origin.

Among the Mattokki resettlement villages, Umbarakaab is above average in keeping its Nubian heritage and language alive, with contemporary artists still performing in Mattokki, the most famous being Ḥasan al-Sughayir.

The proverbs were written in Arabic script and later transcribed in Nubian script by Mekki Muḥammad. I do not have access to the manuscript in Arabic script and therefore do not know whether it includes any diacritics that would have guided its transcription in Nubian script. As contemporary Nubian orthography is in the process of being developed, the manuscript in Nubian script shows ambiguities. Explanations regarding the cultural background and the interpretation of the proverbs are nearly completely missing.

The two Mattokki students did have their thesis supervisor at university more in mind than a western audience. As they were female they may have collected their proverbs from other female Mattokki. Still, only one proverb deals literally with 'women' or 'wives'. However, also in my own collection only five Mattokki proverbs talk literally about women. While it is nearly five times as large, that is the same ratio between proverbs in general and proverbs talking literally about women as in the students' collection.

3.8. This collection of Nubian Wise Sayings and Proverbs

The Andaandi and Mattokki proverb collection presented in the next chapter consists of wise sayings and proverbs in the condition I observed them in during the first and second decade of the new millennium, realising that earlier documentation might have resulted in a different representation or categorisation. Proverbs and wisdom sayings will not be distinguished. Most of the proverbs portray Nubian life prior to the introduction of modern means of appliances, transport and telecommunication and the Egyptian Nubian *hijra* in 1963/64. Until recently living and working outside their villages was

much less common, except for the *jallāba*, the Sudanese traders frequently of Dongolawi origin, whose descendants are still found all over the Sudan.

Among Egyptian Nubian men temporary outmigration was commonplace, due to lack of work opportunities in Lower Nubia. Still, during childhood while growing up in a Nubian village they became deeply rooted in their specific sociocultural traits, and after retirement they would return home and reconnect with village life, enabling thorough understanding of the proverbs' environment.

With the building of the first Aswan Dam in 1902 and even more after the *hijra* in 1963/64 the Mattokki lost most of their homeland, and the customs related to it became more and more obsolete.³⁸⁰ The same goes for the Dongolawi who moved in growing numbers to the cities. Changes like living away from the river for one's entire life span, loss of date palms, and replacing the waterwheel with the diesel pump have made many of the proverbs incomprehensible to Nubians living outside Nubia, and to the younger generation inside Nubia, with consequent loss of its customary wisdom.

So I am very much dependent on elderly speakers, or Nubians who have a vivid interest in their past and cherish it. Besides Ḥāmid Khabīr and the two Mattokki students proverbs were taken from a paper by the transnational Andaandi speaker TAHA A. TAHA (2011) from Magaasir Island, also making use of his explanations. He is working as a lecturer at the University of Florida. As he does not keep to any kind of systematic orthography, especially lengthening of vowels and doubled consonants, his proverbs have been adapted to the orthography used in this thesis.

³⁸⁰ While some contemporary anthropologists do not want “to take the connection between culture and place too literally” (ENGELKE 2018: 45), the loss of living next to the river Nile changed Nubian social traits significantly, as described by ROUCHDY 1991: 14: “Many aspects of the [Egyptian] Nubian culture and social organisation that existed before the building of the [Aswan] High Dam have now changed or disappeared.”

That extends as far as the dictionary: When collecting and checking Mattokki vocabulary I frequently realised that certain Mattokki lexemes are more related to life in pre-*hijra* than in post-*hijra* Nubia. Does Arabic offer better opportunities to express modern day realities in post-*hijra* Nubia than Mattokki?

EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI,³⁸¹ like Ḥāmid Khabīr from Khannaag village, gave me a copy of two unedited sheets of proverbs he had collected himself. AMNA MUṢṬAFA collected proverbs from her mother and other relatives and sent them to me. In 2015 some Dongolawi organised an event, where participants were encouraged to bring some proverbs along. AḤMAD SĀTI and MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF complied with that request.

I visited one internet page containing Andaandi proverbs to confirm the interpretations of some proverbs: www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية/, however, the orthography in Roman and Arabic characters needs revision.³⁸²

Some of the additional Mattokki proverbs were first written down by MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI and ARMGARD GOO-GRAUER in 2009/10. Also, ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ and MEKKI MUḤAMMAD gave me hand-written sheets with proverbs they had collected. KHAYRIA MŪSA is currently collecting proverbs and has given me a few. All are aware of their collections being incorporated in this research.

Individual Andaandi and Mattokki added further proverbs. While travelling in the Sudan and Egypt and later also in the diaspora, any Dongolawi or Mattokki who knew something about proverbs or Nubian culture and was willing to volunteer could become a potential research participant. I complied with the advice by the Egyptian anthropologist Hussein Fahim who was involved in Nubian anthropological studies during the time of the *hijra*:

I would like to suggest that an anthropologist involved in long-term research should widen the circle of informants over the years. He should be able to draw on more varied groups.³⁸³

As my acceptance by the local Nubian community grew, the circle of Nubian research participants widened. Nowadays, this includes speakers from many different Nubian villages, male and also increasingly female.

³⁸¹ Authors of unpublished Nubian proverbs collections, who passed them on to me, are marked by small capital letters.

³⁸² Mainly accessed on 17 August 2022. The internet page does not mention any author or editor. I thank Tamador Gibreel for pointing this out.

³⁸³ HUSSEIN FAHIM 2010: 103.

The prerequisite of working mainly with Andaandi and Mattokki who demonstrate a high competence in language and cultural knowledge leads to most research participants being of above average age. By participating many of them desire to make the Nubian languages and culture better known. Some participants are of less language competency, however, by checking with relatives who have a better grasp, they make up for that deficiency.

The participants connected me to the local community by informing them about my research. Maybe that research encouraged the community's interest in their language and culture, especially younger members of the community asking older ones to widen their understanding about historical and cultural issues. Over time such mutual interest has led to friendships where increasingly time together has been spent on non-language related social activities.

Previously collected proverbs were used as a springboard for further discussions. A couple of times this resulted in remembering further proverbs. Sometimes Dongolawi asked me to consult Ḥāmid Khabīr's book. With Mattokki, when research participants did not understand a proverb at all, a couple of times I showed them the proverb written down. As they were transcribed in the Old Nubian or Roman script in many instances that did not help. Mostly research participants preferred me reading out the proverbs.

This thesis comprises 425 Andaandi wise sayings and proverbs including the ones Ḥāmid Khabīr published. It also incorporates the ones some would classify as idioms, as I include all of Ḥāmid Khabīr's collection.

The 376 Mattokki wise sayings and proverbs include all the proverbs the two Egyptian Mattokki students collected. Among the Mattokki I have rarely observed discussions doubting a collected saying to be a proverb. Only rarely has it been explicitly considered to be a wise saying (*hikma*).

Collecting proverbs and listening to them is much enjoyed by Nubians of all ages, as it adds prestige to their language, "both in the eyes of its speakers but also the wider community."³⁸⁴ In group settings I have never encountered such a pronounced interest as when discussing proverbs, so the task of gathering proverbs became less demanding than other fieldwork. One middle-

³⁸⁴ UNSETH 2008: 4.

aged Mattokki speaker was reminded of his grandmother. A school-aged daughter of a native Mattokki speaker was drawn between continuing her computer games and listening to the Mattokki proverbs.

The majority of Mattokki proverbs reflect the northern Mattokki speech variety as spoken in Debood, Dehemiit, and Umbarakaab. Regional differences can be assumed. A significant number of Mattokki proverbs have been discussed with speakers from both south and north. Maybe due to fewer means of communication between villages in Egyptian Lower Nubia “close-knit localised network structures”³⁸⁵ were stronger among the Mattokki born prior to the *hijra* than among communities in the Dongola Reach. That ensured the survival of non-standard forms of proverbs.

The performance of proverbs has decreased and is certainly no longer a hallmark of Nubianness. Even with Mattokki of high language competency who had lived their childhood in pre-*hijra* Lower Nubia where the proverbs fitted in the environment, patience was necessary before they remembered even a single proverb. Other symbolic actions have taken over the significance of being a good and wise Nubian. While some of these, like hospitality, can be found in Nubian proverbs, others, such as religious performances, are mainly missing. I will discuss missing semantic domains in subchapter 5.2.

While presenting the Nubian proverbs in written form, in the process being made static and archived, it is acknowledged that originally wise sayings and proverbs were part of the oral literature of a speech community. The wording of proverbs “itself is not absolutely fixed”³⁸⁶.

An audience reacts to the oral presentation of the proverbs based on the situational context. Hence, transcription and analysis cause loss of spontaneity and reduce their impact, especially as discourses had to be reconstructed since the highly developed art of crafting, applying and performing a proverb

³⁸⁵ Cf. JOSEPH 2004: 64; based on research by Milroy 1980, who looked into language and social networks.

³⁸⁶ FINNEGAN 1970: 393.

could only be observed infrequently.³⁸⁷ From being “dialogic”³⁸⁸, in this thesis proverbs mainly have become a mere monologue. Performance became presentation. That is why I rarely call the presenter of a proverb a ‘performer’, but name him ‘speaker’. The audience of a proverb is mainly imagined.

I would have preferred to listen to proverbs within discourse, however, staying for extended periods in the villages where Andaandi or Mattokki was spoken was limited for various reasons. It is not advisable to wait until it becomes easier to live in a Nubian village, as the speakers remembering and performing the proverbs are diminishing rapidly. Also, as most of my initial visits were during the Muslim holidays I was among a crowd of other family members staying and working in the cities who returned to their home villages during the holiday season. With many of them the host was required to speak Arabic. Considering these circumstances, the results presented here are the best that could have possibly been achieved within the cultural-sensitive framework of this research.

In this thesis nearly all Mattokki and most Andaandi proverbs are published for the first time for a western audience.³⁸⁹ The Nubian community is also interested in such a collection. They could be included in future primers intended for Nubian literacy. The collection may add value to the Andaandi and Mattokki languages:

Publishing a collection of proverbs from a vernacular language inevitably raises the prestige of the language, both in the eyes of its speakers but also the wider community.³⁹⁰ Asogwa (2002) has collected proverbs to strengthen the Igbo language, hoping that people of the community will be “lured back” to the language. Garcia et al. (2002) report that in working with a language revitalization program among

³⁸⁷ COULMAS 2014: 4: “Writing suggests stability.” STORCH (forthcoming) highlights many of these aspects. She transmits a story from Nigeria and puts it in the context of voice and voicelessness, archiving, and colonial power.

³⁸⁸ JOSEPH 2004: 50.

³⁸⁹ TAHA (2014) was intended for a western audience. There are some earlier publications of the Nubian proverbs presented in this thesis: JAEGER 2014a, JAEGER 2014b, JAEGER 2018, JAEGER 2023.

³⁹⁰ UNSETH 2008: 4.

the Jicarilla Apache ... older speakers wanted to use ... proverbs as one of the ways to teaching the language and culture to the children.³⁹¹

3.9. Taxonomy of proverbs

There are different ways to structure proverbs. Some proverb collections are in alphabetical order, as BURCKHARDT's (2012[1875]) Arabic proverbs. Due to the proverbial variants such an approach would have proven difficult for this Nubian proverb collection. Alternatively, a standard taxonomy, as in KUUSI (1972) or GOLKA (1999)³⁹² could have been applied in the Nubian proverb collection. However, three of the many challenges of such a system are:

M. Kuusi does not describe the structure of the whole planned index (macrostructure), but provides the illustration of its basic sections (microstructure) only. ... Proverbs are complicated structures, and the metatexts presented in the descriptions of types are not capable of describing all the relations manifested in proverbs.³⁹³

Such [proverb] publications attempt to overlook the existence of typological mazes and still present the material as a linear sequence of discrete types.³⁹⁴

Since a single proverb can have divergent meanings used under varied circumstances, it is difficult to sharply distribute individual proverbs across distinct themes.³⁹⁵

In order to overcome these challenges, a taxonomy based on 31 semantic domains related to the Nubian way of life was developed. While this sounds structuralist, fragments Nubian culture, and, in some way, "always consists

³⁹¹ UNSETH 2007: 1.

³⁹² GOLKA 1999 specifically adapts his taxonomy to African culture, consisting of seven domains: Man; man in community; work and possessions; public life; wisdom and folly; God and man; the righteous and the wicked.

³⁹³ GRIGAS 1996.

³⁹⁴ KRIKMANN 2001: 9.

³⁹⁵ HUSSEIN 2005: 64.

of rewriting our ethnographic notes or texts”,³⁹⁶ due to its fine nuances it has helped me to identify key terms of culture more easily as the corpus of proverbs grew. Therefore, chapter 4 is followed by chapter 5 where individual results of chapter 4 are connected and looked at from various angles.

There was no special procedure for deciding on semantic domains. The chosen classification appeared to be the most obvious one after working through Ḥāmid Khabīr’s first proverb collection. Having made the initial taxonomy each further proverb somehow fitted into one of the initial 31 domains. That also proves the wide range of Ḥāmid Khabīr’s work. In order to structure the proverbs I changed Ḥāmid Khabīr’s and the student’s order. However, the footnotes’ specifications going alongside each proverb allow reconstruction.

The semantic domains relate more to a former rural farming community exemplified by river, waterwheel, agriculture, plants, animals, hospitality, food, sickness and death, close-knit system of relationships and strong kinship bonds, indicating great generosity.³⁹⁷ Among the chosen domains animals have most sub-domains depicting the Nubian interdependence in terms of cattle – even the waterwheel was driven by cattle – and other animals.

The taxonomy depends on the literal meaning of each proverb, with the focus on the meaning of nouns, not on its metaphorical meaning. Sometimes the interpreted meaning belongs to a different semantic domain or to more than one domain. Some aspects of structural layers are discussed in the next subchapter.

As this thesis has been written in English the headings of the 31 semantic domains ultimately depend on English words and categories. They were chosen to make Nubian culture accessible to all with sufficient knowledge of English. While the headings are in English, the kind of taxonomy reflects my own German background:

³⁹⁶ Cf. FABIAN 2014: 53-55+62+96. He critiques binary taxonomies, however, also goes against the creation of culture “by selection and classification”.

³⁹⁷ NORDENSTAM 1968: 120; quotes one of his Northern Sudanese students: “The first and most prominent virtue is generosity.”

It had become quite common, especially in Germany, ..., to assert the uniqueness of each people... Educated Germans especially found it attractive to accept such unifying and holistic perspectives on other cultures.³⁹⁸

The semantic domains frequently differ from present life as exercised in an urban setting where most contemporary Nubians live. Possibly future proverbs (not in existence yet) may require further domains, reflecting a more urban setting.

All domains begin with an introduction explaining their cultural relevance, especially in the past, followed by information about more recent changes that may not be covered by the proverbs in this domain. Where available semantic domains are illustrated by quotes from SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN,³⁹⁹ or contemporary Nubians such as the Mattokki AHMED H. DAHAB (1995), and the Fadijja MOHY ELDIN SHERIF (1994). As English is not their native language, their texts have been carefully rendered to enable comprehension. This partly ‘anecdotal evidence’ paints a more colourful and diverse background in which the Nubian proverbs come alive again.

3.10. Lines of Analysis

Each proverb consists of at least six lines transcribing, analysing and adding background information and thereby meaning to it. Instead of a “purely detached abstract [linguistic] analysis”⁴⁰⁰ I strive toward “a proper and detailed documentation of the social and other contexts of speech”⁴⁰¹; fully realising that due to the limitations described before there remains a gap.

³⁹⁸ WIERZBICKA 1997: 18, quoting Eric Wolf.

³⁹⁹ Either under his own name SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1900, 1901, 1902, 1905, 1909; or as part of SCHÄFER 1917, JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921, SCHÄFER 1935. All publications are in German. For the first time these quotes are presented in English translation.

⁴⁰⁰ ALDRIDGE 2021: 191 in his biography about Kenneth L. Pike. In the same paragraph Adridge writes: “Language in context, human thought, and social interaction were all at the center of his [Pike’s] approach to linguistics.” – The first grammar model I studied was Pike’s tagmemics, influencing my way of analysing language.

⁴⁰¹ OKPEWHO 1990: 117. In this case speech is represented by the spoken proverb.

In the following, I outline the task of each of these lines.

3.10.1. Reference Number and Proverb in Nubian Script

The reference number marks the language (A for Andaandi, M for Mattokki), followed by the number of the semantic domain and a consecutive number, separated by a dot. A footnote number refers to a footnote stating the source (oral or written) and the names of research participants providing information on this particular proverb.

A couple of times the 2016 edition of Ḥāmid Khabīr's book on proverbs replaces an Arabic loanword from the 2007 edition by a Nubian word. Such differences are mentioned in the footnotes. However, I do not mark all loanwords in Nubian proverbs.

If the source is the Mattokki student's paper it begins by 'St' followed by the number on that paper.

Nearly all Nubian research participants are proud to remember proverbs. They show preference to be identified with this research; in nearly all cases they want their names to be mentioned explicitly. One Egyptian anthropologist who began with cover names, also for the community, later had second thoughts about it:

If I were to begin a new longitudinal study in another community, I would use the actual name of the community in all my writings, because I would wish the people under study to share my perceptions and analysis of their lifestyle.⁴⁰²

Regarding confidentiality I agree with the following statement:

The world is a more complex and sophisticated place than it was even a generation ago, and many informants/subjects of research are literate, conscious people for whom questions of confidentiality would be understood and appreciated.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² HUSSEIN FAHIM 2010: 104. Already before the *hijra* A. Goo-Grauer observed the desire to have real names used.

⁴⁰³ FLUEHR-LOBBAN 1991: 218.

Some female research participants hesitated to have their names published. One woman was aware that if she gave her name, she would honour her father, and if she would be mentioned as ‘wife of ...’ she would honour her husband. Sometimes there was no opportunity to confirm with the research participant, as I lost contact or the speaker was already deceased. In that case I took the name with which I had addressed that particular woman, as ‘Umm Hamdi’.

The name of the research participant is followed by his/her village of origin, allowing easier identification. Sometimes I was asked to include the nickname for easier reference within the Nubian community.

Sometimes a Nubian co-investigator who provided a proverb also explained it. The village the co-investigator belongs to and the names of further co-investigators are listed. The orthography of Nubian place names, in this thesis in Roman script, is made difficult by inconsistencies and Arabic influence:

There has been a widespread tendency towards hypercorrection. Nubian toponyms were ‘corrected’ and distorted to fit the phonological patterns of Arabic.⁴⁰⁴

Two examples of writing Nubian place names are SCHÄFER (1917: 41) and JUNKER and SCHÄFER (1932). Based on these sources Amgard Goo-Grauer and Olga Zenker (unpublished) extended research on Nubian place names and how to spell them. Their input has been taken into account.

The proverb reference number is followed by the proverb in Nubian script according to the Andaandi orthography as described in JAEGER and KAMAL HUSSEIN (2012) and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and JAEGER (2012) with minor modifications as observed in Nubian literacy classes.

Frequently, Hāmid Khabīr’s Old Nubian orthography in the 2016 edition differs from the one used in this thesis. While some Nubians from the Sudan and Egypt used to meet in order to standardise Nubian orthography until 2013, there has been no language committee that reaches binding conclusions. Also, while working with Hāmid Khabīr, he frequently pointed out that he lacked opportunities to correct printing mistakes before publication.

⁴⁰⁴ BELL 2018: 732.

In order to enable comparison between Andaandi and Mattokki both languages are written the same way causing slight differences to the orthographical rules some of the Mattokki teachers in Egypt use. Especially the Nubian vowels OY and O are not distinguished by their vowel qualities [u] [ɔ], but according to their being “strong” or “weak”. It results in⁴⁰⁵

- [ɔr] (‘king’) written as OYP
- [ur] (‘head’) written as OP
- [buru] (‘girl’) written as BOYPO
- [-su] (-PRT2-3SG) written as CO

In their classes Mattokki teachers do not define when a vowel is strong or weak. However, ‘weak’ seems to refer to a short, unstressed vowel.

The same goes for € and l with € being used for “weak” vowels.

Mekki Muḥammad, one of the Nubian teachers in Egypt, prefers Serif fonts to Sans Serif fonts, giving the Nubian script a slightly different look. He also favours monographs to digraphs (e.g. OY). The preferred monograph is not part of the Greek or Coptic Unicode code page.

Since about 2015 Nubian teachers in Egypt have begun replacing B by Π, as the second character was used in Old Nubian more frequently.

DUR *aa* und TAM *bi* before verbs are frequently prefixed.

The Mattokki teacher ‘Umar Ḥasan can be considered to be the only Mattokki teacher who was closely following developments in Andaandi literacy. Until his untimely death he moved closer to the Andaandi orthography.

Topics still under discussion are assimilation and word boundaries. Old Nubian lacked a unified approach toward these matters, some Nubians tend toward greater separation of morphemes, others toward joining them. I aim for a middle-of-the-road approach. Assimilation is considered in spelling if the basic syntactical structure is still recognisable.

⁴⁰⁵ The first two spellings are taken from a Mattokki class held by Mahjūb Mīrghani in 2006 in Alexandria, the last two from another Mattokki class held by Mekki Muḥammad in 2008 in Cairo.

Especially lengthened vowels, vowel qualities, and doubled consonants, are taken care of. The verb final ‘-n’ was already frequently dropped in day-to-day speech 60 years ago:

Listening to recordings in the Dongola dialect I often asked myself,
“Did I hear a final ‘n’ or not?”⁴⁰⁶

Jalāl ‘Umar from Merowaarti, who among Andaandi speakers is considered the best Andaandi poet and thereby a linguistic authority, regularly pronounces the verb final ‘-n’. Therefore, it has been included with Andaandi proverbs.

Exclamation and question marks are set similar to European languages. Commas are placed after each clause to make it easier for non-Andaandi- or non-Mattokki-speaking readers to recognise the clause structure.

Werner analyses tone and how it works in the Nile Nubian languages:

In Nobiin the tone patterns (or structures) emerge very clearly; and this has consequences for other Nubian languages. So we can assume in the Kenzi-Dongolawi language as well that similar, if not fully identical, phenomena can be discerned.⁴⁰⁷

That agrees with Samuel Ali Hissein who in the introduction to his translation of Matthew’s gospel in 1912 stated that tone is a feature to be reckoned with in Mattokki.⁴⁰⁸ I could not find anything written later where he expounds this theory.

Nāṣr ‘Ali Sāti, a Dongolawi from Magaasir Island, is the first researcher on Andaandi to confirm Werner’s expectations on Andaandi tone.⁴⁰⁹ He and

⁴⁰⁶ MASSENBAACH 1962: XVIII; in the German original: “Beim Abhören des Tonbandes im Dongola-Dialekt stellte ich mir öfter die Frage: War ein auslautendes *n* zu hören oder nicht?”

⁴⁰⁷ WERNER 1987: 77; in the German original: “Die Tatsache, daß im Nobiin Tonstrukturen so deutlich werden, hat Konsequenzen auch für andere nubische Sprachen. So ist davon auszugehen, daß sich im Kenzi-Dongolawi ähnliche, wenn nicht zum großen Teil identische Phänomene finden lassen werden.”

⁴⁰⁸ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1912a.

⁴⁰⁹ WERNER 1987: 49-58.

Kamal Hussein discovered minimal pairs concluding that tone is a distinctive feature in Andaandi.⁴¹⁰

All that contrasts with Charles H. Armbruster who writes about Andaandi:

But I find no trace of the use of different musical tones or variation in pitch in the same form of word for the purpose of semantically differentiating homophones; and homophones are plentiful in Nubian.⁴¹¹

In conclusion, as research on tone is still at its infancy and in neighbouring Nobiin tone has not changed orthography,⁴¹² I omit writing tone.

3.10.2. Proverb in Roman Script

In the 2007 Andaandi proverb edition, Kamal Hussein assisted Ḥāmid Khabīr in adding a transcription in Roman script to his collection of proverbs at an early stage. However, as Ḥāmid Khabīr was eager to have the proverbs published and his fields required tilling, the Roman script line could not be adapted according to later changes and therefore sometimes differs from the transcription in Nubian script.

Both editions of Ḥāmid Khabīr's proverb collection include a transcription in Arabic script, with the 2016 edition based on the orthography developed by the Yūsif Khalīfa centre. In this thesis no Arabic spelling of Nubian words is attempted, as even for Nubians who have achieved high competency in written Arabic, the Arabic script is difficult to comprehend.

3.10.3. Parsing into Morphemes

Each proverb is parsed into its morphemes according to the dictionaries of ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]), MASSENBAACH (1933), and my own working dictionary created with the Field Linguist's Toolbox software.⁴¹³ Most

⁴¹⁰ Nāṣr 'Ali Sāti 2007, p.c. The results of his PhD thesis have not been published or otherwise made available.

⁴¹¹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §1405.

⁴¹² At the Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Conference 2021 Eliane Jaeger presented some further insights into Mattokki and Andaandi tone. It remains unpublished.

⁴¹³ It can be downloaded at software.sil.org/toolbox [last accessed on 13 December 2021]. The latest version and the one I am using is 1.6.4, released in May 2019. Its

lexemes belonging to the semantic domain under discussion are put in bold, highlighting words introduced at the beginning of each domain. A zero morpheme is attached to any Mattokki verb that on the surface appears without suffix or clitic.⁴¹⁴ It is also glossed. An *r* inserted between the final vowel of one morpheme and the first vowel of the following morpheme is not glossed.

3.10.4. Glossing of Morphemes

I am thankful to have been involved in the discussion of the glossing of ‘The Miracle of Saint Mina’s translation from Old Nubian into Andaandi.’⁴¹⁵ It is the longest Andaandi text with glossing currently available. Results that were reached during the analysis have been applied to Nubian proverbs, too.

I am aware of describing Nubian grammar “in the image of other [language]s more familiar to them [i.e. western readers and myself]”.⁴¹⁶ However, also Nubians are frequently inclined to such a process. Time and again I observe them aiming to find parallels between Nubian and especially English. In 2006 I met a Dongolawi BA holder who had just finished writing her thesis at a Sudanese university on the topic “Comparison of Dongolese Language and English Language”, concentrating on the Andaandi verb. Other similarities pointed out by Nubians are the English 1SG pronoun ‘I’ and the Andaandi/Mattokki 1SG pronoun *ay*.

Another critique is that knowledge becomes “*arranged*, ... ordered knowledge, easily representable in diagrammatic or tabular form.”⁴¹⁷ I still go for

use in analysing Andaandi and Mattokki is explained in JAEGER 2006a when the software was still named ‘Shoebbox’. – FLOREY (2008: 128) also reports positively about training Indonesian students with the Toolbox software.

⁴¹⁴ I distinct between affixes/suffixes and clitics as HASPELMATH 2022: 1: “... affixes are class-selective (occurring always on nouns, on verbs, or on adjectives), while clitics ... do not exhibit word-class selectivity.” Affixes and clitics agree in both not being a root. (HASPELMATH 2022: 19)

⁴¹⁵ Cf. EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and VAN GERVEN OEI 2012. The translator speaks Andaandi.

⁴¹⁶ ERRINGTON 2008: 3.

⁴¹⁷ FABIAN 2014: 121.

a customary linguistic analysis in order to allow language data to be comparable with other descriptions of languages.

With motion verbs ending in a long vowel (e.g. *juu*, *taa* and *too*) the Old Nubian root is used where it still survives (e.g. *juur*, *taar* and *toor*). The hidden root-final consonant *r* is also added to other verbs ending in a vowel where some derivatives show its existence like *bee* (to kill), *atta/etta* (to bring), *koo* (to have), *sokke* (to lift), *tabbe* (to touch), *tolle* (to pull).⁴¹⁸

Besides the roots each grammatical morpheme and clitic is rendered by its grammatical category according to an adapted set of the Leipzig glossing rules and abbreviations.⁴¹⁹ The abbreviations are explained in the ‘Conventions and Abbreviations’ section at the beginning. Specified glosses are listed below:

- The ablative ABL is not marked specifically. Instead, any LOC followed by *toon* represents the ablative.⁴²⁰
- If the accusative ACC clitic =*gi* (allomorph =*ki*) ends a relative clause, the clause is bracketed [...]. If it ends indirect speech, the clause is bracketed and marked as indirect speech IS.
- For adverbs ADV see ARMBRUSTER 1960 §§ 2038-2042. To distinguish =*gi* from =*ged*, the latter is glossed as ADV:INS.
- When the instrumental INS clitic =*ged* (allomorph =*ked* and variant =*gad*) is attached to a subordinate or a verbal clause, it marks a causative clause CAUS. While MASSENBACH (1933: 135) writes that =*ged* is used with the preterit and =*gad* with the present (named neutral tense here), her example sentences are not that clear-cut. I mostly found the opposite distribution, i.e. =*ged* goes with the neutral tense and =*gad* with the preterit. I

⁴¹⁸ Cf. ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§3533-3535. I also thank Angelika Jakobi for discussing this aspect.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php [last accessed on 15 October 2020].

⁴²⁰ Unlike JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2016, and ASMAA A. KENAWY (2023: 56) I write *toon* as a separate lexeme as preferred among some literate Nubians. Besides a literal translation of *toon* ‘from’ it could also be glossed as a source (SRC).

distinguish it from the INS clitic after a noun phrase. In the literal translation I translate it as ‘because’ or ‘when’, depending on the context. Another causative marker is *-kiddi*.⁴²¹

- The comparative COMP usually follows a genitive or possessive marker. However, it may also be omitted.
- A copula COP is defined as “any morpheme (affix, particle, or verb) that joins or “couples” two nominal elements in a predicate nominal construction.”⁴²² To prevent complex glossing information, COP:3SG and COP:NEUT are glossed as COP only. The copula *-tera* “denotes identity”.⁴²³
- When the genitive GEN is attached to a subordinate or a verbal clause, it is followed by SUB or by COMP.
- The inchoative INCH glosses *an*. Like El-Shafie El-Guzuuli I treat it as a separate root.⁴²⁴
- The intensifier INTF glosses depending on the context either *-j-* or *-ij-*. See also REPT below.
- LV marks verbs loaned from Arabic lexemes, usually ending in *ee*.
- Usually I do not distinguish between different kinds of negation NEG. Negation in main (*-munun* and variants) and subordinate, interrogative and imperative clauses (*-men* and *-mee*), except for *-munan*, is glossed NEG.3PL.
- The passive PASS glosses *-katti* (in Andaandi) and *-takki* (in Mattokki). However, “[t]he passive is mostly rephrased using the third person plural. As a rule, instead of ‘I am loved’ *aigi tógiran* (Kenzi-Dongolawi) ... it is said ‘they love ... me’.”⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ *kiddi* in MASSENBAACH 1933: 187; yet *iddi* in MASSENBAACH 1933: §20.8, 132; and in ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§3717-3720, 255-256.

⁴²² PAYNE 1997: 114.

⁴²³ MASSENBAACH 1933: 127.

⁴²⁴ EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015: 100; example sentence 25.

⁴²⁵ REINISCH 1879: 61; in the German original: “Das passiv wird am häufigsten durch die dritte person pluralis umschrieben, man sagt in der regel anstatt: ich werde geliebt *aigi tógiran* (KD) ... ‘sie lieben ... mich’.”

- The perfective PFV glosses *-ed* and *-os*, two aspect markers. Andaandi and Mattokki participant researchers explain *-os*⁴²⁶ (var. *-od*) as an emphatic marker, or as a completed action.⁴²⁷ While its exact meaning depends on the context, I always gloss it with PFV. In the proverbs I usually translate *-os-ko* (Andaandi) and *-os-s* (Mattokki), i.e. -PFV-PRT, by the English past. The action happened earlier in the past than an action marked by *-s* only.⁴²⁸ If there is no PRT, IMP or TAM marker, either in the main or in the subordinate clause, “it expresses a recent or very recent past in Andaandi, i.e. an action that has recently or just be completed.”⁴²⁹ *-os* with the imperative marks an action that is to be completed.
- The possessive POSS usually occurs with a 1/2/3SG or 1/2/3PL pronoun. With the kinship terms *baab* ‘father’, *een* ‘mother’ and *bes* ‘brother’ the possessive pronoun is in the plural, as in: *in niin(a) timbaab te?* ‘Whose father is this?’ Before a non-kinship term possessive pronouns are written as separate words. The possessive could be further analysed as a pronoun followed by a genitive marker (e.g. *enn* / 2SG:POSS analysed as *er+n* / 2SG+GEN). That becomes obvious when uttering the possessive noun followed by a noun beginning with a vowel. While I do not write such a detailed analysis, the orthography in this thesis follows this observation.
- Before a kinship term my orthography of the possessive POSS follows the discussion with Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz half-way through the thesis in 2010. He considers *an-* and correspondingly *en-* and *ten-* and their plural forms as “bound morphemes” and writes them as prefixes. Also, I do not double the morpheme final *n* (or its variant *m*) as with other possessive pronouns. Accordingly, Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz distinguishes between the kinship term *een* ‘mother’, and *een* ‘wife, woman’ (that he does not consider a

⁴²⁶ In Urbi sometimes *-os* is lengthened, as in proverb A24.9, it becomes *-oos* (Kamal Hussein 2022, p.c.). MASSENBACH (1933: 204) has both variants for Mattokki, with no further explanation. In the proverbs I do not differentiate between *-os* and *-oos*.

⁴²⁷ E.g. BECHHAUS-GERST 1996: 263; based on LEPSIUS 1880: 156.

⁴²⁸ E.g. Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2022, p.c. – The double *s* in *-os-s* (Mattokki) is not always pronounced, as already SCHÄFER (1917: 16) noticed. I will still write it.

⁴²⁹ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2020, p.c.

kinship term): *teneen* ‘his mother’, and *tenn een* ‘his wife’. The first one needs a prefix marking the possessive, as any kinship term, the second may occur without a possessive, then meaning ‘woman’. It also corresponds to Nubian phonetics where the first possessive pronoun is uttered with a single *n*, the second with a geminated *n*.

- The preterit PRT1 glosses *-ko* as in Old Nubian; the preterit PRT2 glosses *-s* as in Old Nubian.
- The repetitive REPT glosses *-katti* when its meaning is not passive. It denotes the habitual and skilful nature of the agent’s action. In the proverbs it follows verbs and nouns, but not adjectives.⁴³⁰
- In Mattokki, I mark the final *-n* of subordinate clauses as SUB, as the sentence final *n* in main clauses has been lost, again agreeing with Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz (2016).

In order to be more precise I add a few subcategories of question sentences:

- Q:ACC: accusative question (what?)
- Q:CAUS: causative question (why?)
- Q:LOC: locative question (where?)
- Q:NEG:FOC: negated question with focus: ‘Isn’t it? – My glossing agrees with Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz (2016). MASSENBACH (1933: 195) interprets the particle *me* only as German “warum” (“why”, i.e. Q:CAUS).
- Q:NEUT: polar question in neutral tense
- Q:PRED: glosses *te* in a predication or polar question as in EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI (2015: 10) who takes the term ‘predication’ from ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 194).
- Q:PRT: polar question in preterit tense
- Q:TMP: temporal question (when?)

⁴³⁰ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§2534-2535.

3.10.5. Literal Translation

“Translation serves ... as ... a mediation between host and guest languages.”⁴³¹ To overcome some of the challenges, I proceed in two steps. The Literal Translation renders a proverb mainly ‘word-for-word’ into the meta-language English with slight syntactical reordering of words and morphemes. Some scholars call this line the “allusive plane”.⁴³² It provides the reader with a bridge to the original wording and flavour without requesting knowledge of Andaandi or Mattokki. When the Mattokki students’ less literal Arabic translation of a Mattokki proverb has been helpful, it has been translated into English and marked by ‘St. transl.’.

There is two dangers that any literal translation loses the wide applicability of a proverb and therefore is considered insufficient for mediation:

... proverbs cannot be translated word for word; rather they should be translated into equivalent concepts in TL (Target Language) to convey the same meaning and produce the same effect on the readers.⁴³³

In order to remedy the second shortcoming, in the section next but one I present the second step, a meaning based translation on the Interpretative Plane.

3.10.6. Word Meaning and Explanations

This occasional line begins with an otherwise rather unknown or difficult to understand Nubian lexeme, phrase or grammatical construction to be explained.

Collecting proverbs enabled me to extend my own database of Andaandi and Mattokki lexemes, especially as some proverbs contain lexemes that otherwise seem to have been lost due to describing “objects that are not culturally relevant anymore”.⁴³⁴ One example is the domain of the waterwheel that has become nearly completely out of use since the 1970s. It indicates the

⁴³¹ KEARNEY 2019: 1

⁴³² E.g. OHA 1998: 90.

⁴³³ RIAZI 2002.

⁴³⁴ CRAIG 2004[1997]: 262.

... tension between the uniqueness of the pre-modern past out of which the language has evolved and the power potentials of the modern arena to which its adherents aspire, even though the latter is accompanied by a rather more uniform “modern lifestyle” the world over.⁴³⁵

Fortunately, in most instances I have been able to connect with Nubians who still remember and most gladly share their knowledge with me. I am thankful that Andaandi as well as Mattokki speakers let me know when they did not remember or forgot a lexeme. If they guessed they told me so. I also have looked up the lexeme in one of the older dictionaries such as ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965], data collected in the 1910s) or MASSENBACH (1933). If a meaning is rediscovered, it also helps the Nubian counterpart to see the wealth of their languages and thus increases the language’s value and status. Only in a few instances could a lexeme not be traced.

3.10.7. Interpretative Plane

Many proverb collections offer impressionistic ‘literal paraphrases’⁴³⁶ that in my opinion do not do justice to the ethnicity who provided them. By first introducing a semantic domain’s cultural background I aim to bring to life the environment of the metaphors used in that particular domain. Proverbs with similar imagery may show similarity in what they want to express. These anthropological symbols make one wonder whether

the primitive whose way of thinking, expressing, or being is symbolic, or [whether] anthropology [is] symbolic in the sense that it projects onto its Other symbolic meanings and understandings, ...⁴³⁷

Proverbial metaphors originate within a given culture; they are not projected. Research participants are the interpretative authority that guides into the metaphors’ content(s) and understanding(s) and uncover the range of possible meanings and interpretations. It is the perlocutionary act, the desired reaction of the audience.

⁴³⁵ FISHMAN, 2004[1997]: 335.

⁴³⁶ Based on GODDARD 2009: 105.

⁴³⁷ FABIAN 2014: 125.

Therefore, I add an “interpretative plane”⁴³⁸ or meaning-based free translation line marked by an arrow. As a metaphor may require paraphrasing, the interpretative plane may be longer than the proverb itself.

Interpretations are dynamic and may change. Different members of a speech community may attach various meanings to the same proverb depending on the speaker’s background, environment, perspective, values and viewpoints, and “mutually exclusive contexts”.⁴³⁹ Also, the influence of time on the “cultural validity of the analogy”⁴⁴⁰ may change a proverb’s meaning. In extreme cases the intended meaning cannot be discovered, as some of the Nubian words are not known anymore or its situational context cannot be reproduced. “[T]erms or images keep even insiders from fully understanding their meaning.”⁴⁴¹

While interpretations are diverse, for members belonging to the same speech community well rooted in their culture there are limits. The “common premises [lead to] predictably convergent inferential processes”⁴⁴² when asking about a proverb’s interpretation. Speakers who assign similar interpretations to a proverb become members of the same “interpretative community”.⁴⁴³ Still, the researcher needs to listen carefully when working in two different languages, as Andaandi and Mattokki, and not assume similarities.

The research participants negotiate their interpretation depending on the situational context and the audience. How does the performer of a proverb want to be perceived by the audience? What impact does he want to achieve? Also, instead of considering the audience’s perception, the performer may

⁴³⁸ Term taken from OHA 1998: 90.

⁴³⁹ ENFIELD 2000: 51.

⁴⁴⁰ OHA 1998: 90.

⁴⁴¹ JUNGRAITHMAYR (2006: XIX) about Tangale proverbs.

⁴⁴² ENFIELD 2000: 35.

⁴⁴³ FISH 1980: 147-174, and JOSEPH 2004: 65. – While Fish develops his theory of interpretative communities for readers of written texts it can be extended to oral texts. In the case of proverbs the interpreters are the speakers who perform a proverb they heard before, the recipients are the audience of a proverb, or, in our case, the research participants interpreting a proverb and explaining its meaning.

have pondered his perception by the researcher. More negative meanings may have been excluded due to the concept of *sutera*. Therefore, it is not always straightforward for an outsider to decide the quality of an interpretation. In order to capture as many divergent interpretations as possible, most meanings of each Nubian proverb encountered during the research have been included. Frequently the interpretative plane begins with ‘He’. That is due to discussing the proverbs mainly in Arabic and English, both of which, unlike Nubian, distinguish gender. As most research participants like me are male, a proverb’s meaning has been related first and foremost to male people.

This research is limited. Frequently the interpretative plane is based on a presumed context due to the Nubian proverbs being uttered within a conversation in a non-Nubian language. As many answers were translated, usually from Arabic to English, I may be prone to misinterpreting a co-investigator’s replies.

Also, according to my insights into cultural knowledge I attempt to ‘read’ my local research participants and may have misread or over-read them without them telling me. When questioning my understanding of certain interpretations I discovered that I had to learn more or that I had not understood properly.

In order to continue the research and keep the speakers’ trust I have to reciprocate, assuming that everybody has done their best and that the propositional content of the communication is basically correct. The research participants also have to ‘read’ me and assume that certain cultural concepts relating to the proverbs need further explanation. I am glad that research participants repeat patiently when I do extensive cross-checking. It demonstrates their desire to make their wisdom known to a wider Nubian and non-Nubian audience, with myself the first to benefit.

3.10.8. Usage

Further information may be provided describing typical or recurrent situations where a proverb was or could have been performed. In so doing its comprehension is expanded, leading toward an understanding of the reception and its possible effects.

Some of the context settings may not have happened for a long time, so remembrance may be restricted. A detailed narrative of situations in which a proverb is performed has not been possible, as there are always more conceivable contexts.

3.10.9. Similar Proverbs in other Languages

Similarity between proverbs from different languages does not necessarily mean that they have the same root or are related to each other. Instead, certain environmental aspects may have been alike, causing analogous proverbial knowledge. Proverbs in Arabic, and English, and idioms with different metaphors yet roughly equivalent meanings and analogous structure or wording have been added, marked by ‘MSA’, ‘SCA’,⁴⁴⁴ ‘ECA’,⁴⁴⁵ and ‘English’. As Nubians enjoy comparing the Nubian languages with English, the corresponding English proverbs stimulate the avid Nubian reader for further discourse.⁴⁴⁶

3.10.10. Variants of Proverbs

Writing down proverbs and archiving them leads to some degree of standardisation, especially as in all other proverb collections mentioned above, variants of proverbs are usually omitted, thus indicating some preference for one speech variety. By adding variants of proverbs in my collection, different speech varieties are given as much as possible equal value. Due to keeping the “minimal recognizable unit” or “kernel”⁴⁴⁷ or

⁴⁴⁴ SCA (Sudanese Colloquial Arabic) proverbs are m taken from SALWA AHMED 2005.

⁴⁴⁵ In no way does the mentioning of an Arabic proverb mean that the Nubian proverb is derived from the Arabic proverb. Some Arabic proverbs resemble Aramaic proverbs. (GOTEIN 1966: 373) So, Arabic and the Nubian proverbs may have a different root.

⁴⁴⁶ Men from Umbarakaab (2012) discussing the proverbs requested me to compare their Mattokki and corresponding English proverbs.

⁴⁴⁷ MIEDER 2004: 7.

showing “two forms, the full and the abbreviated”,⁴⁴⁸ variants of proverbs are easily recognised.

Proverbs may differ between villages. Some proverbs may only be known in some villages, depending on the environment. As an example, West Aswan, being the contemporary Mattokki village with most agriculture, is also known to have more proverbs about agriculture than any other Mattokki village.⁴⁴⁹

The speech variety of Ḥāmid Khabīr’s village Khannaag is understood by other Andaandi speakers. Therefore, regional variants that have been encountered during the checking process are easily identified, and where consistent, like the variant *-ho* of the preterit marker *-ko* or other phonological variations between villages, are not listed.

While I attempt to prefer Ḥāmid Khabīr’s or the student’s version, some research participants eagerly put forward alternative wordings. Variations may also exist due to individual differences or different stages of language shift.

The same goes for the proverbs collected by the two Mattokki students, with the difference that it can only be assumed that most of them were collected in Umbarakaab from where the students originated. The speech variety of Umbarakaab is understood easily by most other Mattokki speakers, the same as the variety of Khannaag in the Dongola Reach.

3.11. Grammatical Analysis of Proverbs

The sheer number of Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs offer a fundus of language data for gaining further insight into Nubian grammar, especially as proverbs reflect a more ancient layer of language and grammatical structure.⁴⁵⁰ Two African researchers working on Nigerian Urhobo proverbs confirm the benefits of analysing linguistic features of proverbs as they “help

⁴⁴⁸ FINNEGAN 1970: 402.

⁴⁴⁹ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2012, p.c.

⁴⁵⁰ MFONYAM 2014: 4: “As a repository of culture and language, [proverbs] have been passed down from generation to generation in an oral tradition, they have preserved important aspects of the culture and also earlier stages or forms of language.”

to reveal ... how the linguistic features combine with the social, cultural and psychological elements”.⁴⁵¹ One example are Nubian coordinators that are increasingly falling into disuse, being replaced by Arabic coordinators that many contemporary Nubian speakers consider to be easier to utilise.⁴⁵²

When restricted in travelling due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I experienced another unique aspect of proverbs when discussing grammar on the telephone. Due to bad connections a plain example sentence was less easily understood than a proverbial saying. With the latter the recipient was able to make up the remainder and then support me in analysing morphemes and grammar.

However, it needs to be born in mind that proverbs may be deliberately grammatically ambiguous so that “proverbs are probably not good examples for grammatical analysis since the desire for verbal artistry often bend the normal rules of grammar.”⁴⁵³ Also, “it is clear that *some* sort of heightened speech, in one form or another, is commonly used in proverbs: and that this serves to set them apart from ordinary speech.”⁴⁵⁴ In that regard proverbs are “closer to poetry than prose”.⁴⁵⁵

During the process of collecting proverbs it has become clear that the benefits of deducing grammatical aspects from a fundus of proverbs outweighs its deficiencies. Therefore, in the following chapter I will gloss each proverb,

⁴⁵¹ MEBITAGHAN and AZIZA 2013. Compare that statement speaking positively about linguistics and its relation to human beings with COULMAS (2004: 4): “Linguistic theory is hence a theory about language without human beings.” These two ways of viewing linguistics are discussed in DECKER and GRUMMIT (2012: 5-6) putting Chomsky’s transformational grammar on the same side as Coulmas.

⁴⁵² JAEGER 2014b: 117; El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2011 p.c. The use and non-use of Nubian coordinators can be part of the identity of the individual speaker. Note JOSEPH (2004: 38): “group identities are sometimes manifested *primarily* through shared linguistic features.” I do not think that ‘primarily’ is valid for Dongolawi or Mattokki but remains one option.

⁴⁵³ UNSETH 2008: 5.

⁴⁵⁴ FINNEGAN 1970: 403.

⁴⁵⁵ HANSFORD 2003: 59; based on Awedoba 2000.

acknowledging that glossing reduces “the reality of language”, and substitutes a “simplified part for a complex whole”.⁴⁵⁶

Some of the foundations of Andaandi and Mattokki grammar are already presented in the grammars of Charles H. ARMBRUSTER (1960, Andaandi), Gertrud von MASSENBACH (1933, Mattokki), and AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ (1988, Mattokki), providing a basis for the glossing of proverbs. More recent research on specific Nubian grammatical issues are JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015 (relative clauses), JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2016 (case markers and clause coordinators/linkers), and JAKOBI 2021 (verbal suffixes/verb extensions).

I begin with main and subordinate clauses, followed by case marking and discourse structure. In no way is the grammatical introduction meant to be all-encompassing. It is to help comprehension of glossing in the following chapter. For a more detailed discussion I refer to the grammars mentioned above.

3.11.1. Main Clauses

The standard word order of Andaandi and Mattokki main and subordinate transitive clauses is Subject – Object – Verb.⁴⁵⁷ In intransitive clauses it is shortened to Subject – Verb. The subject is not made explicit if it can be concluded from its context. So there are Andaandi and Mattokki clauses consisting of a verb only.⁴⁵⁸

The most common Andaandi and Mattokki sentence structure is the active simple clause in “neutral tense” (NEUT), a term preferred by Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz, as “[t]he neutral tense (-r Ø) may refer to present, past and future time.”⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ ERRINGTON 2008: 7.

⁴⁵⁷ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§ 4612-4618; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 201.

⁴⁵⁸ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§ 4609-4610.

⁴⁵⁹ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 130. Following from here I retain his definitions of tense and aspect (pp. 130+143), taken from works by John Lyons, whom he incorrectly cites as L. Lyons (p. 322), and Bernhard Comrie.

“Present ... tense” is used by Armbruster and “Indikativ Präsens” by Massenbach.⁴⁶⁰

The zero morpheme \emptyset occurs in the 2nd and 3rd person singular. When glossing the proverbs, in this context I omit the zero morpheme \emptyset and its corresponding NEUT designation.

The conjugation of the neutral tense, valid for Andaandi and Mattokki, is:⁴⁶¹

<i>ay teeg-(i)r-i(n)</i>	1SG sit-NEUT-1SG
<i>er teeg-\emptyset-i(n)</i>	2SG sit-(NEUT)-2SG
<i>ter teeg-\emptyset-i(n)</i>	3SG sit-(NEUT)-3SG
<i>ar teeg-(i)r-u(n)</i>	1PL sit-NEUT-1PL
<i>ir teeg-(i)r-u(n)</i>	2PL sit-NEUT-2PL
<i>tir teeg-(i)r-a(n)</i>	3PL sit-NEUT-3PL

When the verb root ends in a voiced plosive consonant, the following NEUT suffix *-r* is mostly replaced by its allomorph *-ir*.⁴⁶² The same goes for verb roots ending in a nasal⁴⁶³ and ending in an approximant/semivowel.⁴⁶⁴

In Mattokki, the verb-final *n* of the 2nd and 3rd person is not pronounced sentence finally. It only occurs at the end of a subordinate clause. Therefore, I gloss it as 2SG:SUB or 3SG:SUB.

The so-called “perfect tense”, “Präteritum”, “past tense”⁴⁶⁵ or preterit (PRT) is realised in Andaandi as *-ko*, with allomorphs *-go* and *-ho*, in Mattokki as *-s*.

⁴⁶⁰ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2903; MASSENBACH 1933:§16B1, 124.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. MASSENBACH 1933:§16B1. I have added (i) and slightly changed the orthography.

⁴⁶² Cf. A1.12, A2.8, A2.11, A3.2, A8.2, A8.4, A14.6, A19.40, A22.17, M18.3, M22.23.

⁴⁶³ Cf. A9.25, A10.6.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. A7.13, A13.12, M23.8. – For the interpretation of semivowels in Andaandi, see JAEGER and KAMAL HUSSEIN 2012; especially p. 126.

⁴⁶⁵ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §926; MASSENBACH 1933:§16B2, 125; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 135.

Again, I adapt the conjugation taken from Massenbach⁴⁶⁶ for Mattokki and Andaandi:

Andaandi	Mattokki	Gloss
<i>ay teeg-kor-i</i>	<i>ay teeg-s-i</i>	1SG sit-PRT-1SG
<i>er teeg-ko-n</i>	<i>er teeg-s-u</i>	2SG sit-PRT-2SG
<i>ter teeg-ko-n</i>	<i>ter teeg-s-u</i>	3SG sit-PRT-3SG
<i>ar teeg-kor-u</i>	<i>ar teeg-s-u</i>	1PL sit-PRT-1PL
<i>ir teeg-kor-u</i>	<i>ay teeg-s-u</i>	2PL sit-PRT-2PL
<i>tir teeg-kor-an</i>	<i>ay teeg-s-a</i>	3PL sit-PRT-3PL

In Andaandi, the PRT suffix is *-ko*, the NEUT suffix *-r*, and the 1SG/1PL/3PL suffix *-i/-u/-an*. Therefore, for instance, *-koran* could be analysed as three suffixes, glossed -PRT1-NEUT-3PL, with two tense markers PRT1 and NEUT next to each other. For 1SG/1PL it would be similar. Such a glossing seems lacking as two markers belong to the same category. Therefore, I consider *-kor* a variant of *-ko*; and divide here and in the following *-koran* into two suffixes only, i.e. *-kor-an*.⁴⁶⁷ – In Mattokki, the lengthened suffix *-koo* replaces *-s* in negated sentences in the preterit.⁴⁶⁸

Through grammaticalisation, in Mattokki the verb *aag* ‘to sit’ / ‘to stay’ became the progressive (PROG) *aa*. In the literal translation I could have applied the English present or past continuous or (in the past) the phrase ‘used to’ to express the progressive explicitly.⁴⁶⁹ However, as it occurs in Mattokki only and in order to align Mattokki with Andaandi, I translate using the English simple present or past.

If *aa/aag* is preceded by the ACC clitic =*gi* and its variant =*ki*, I follow Asmaa A. Kenawy’s orthography and drop the clitic-final *i*.

⁴⁶⁶ MASSENBACH 1933: §16B2. With Mattokki Massenbach adds a final *m*. I do not write it as I did not hear it.

⁴⁶⁷ As in JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2016: 170.

⁴⁶⁸ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 136; missing in MASSENBACH 1933.

⁴⁶⁹ As ASMAA A. KENAWY 2023: 243+244.

The tense-aspect-modality (TAM) marker *bi* expresses mainly an intention to perform an action in the immediate future. Most precise is Massenbach, describing it as “the intention, the incipient action, the very near future”.⁴⁷⁰ Otherwise it is plainly called “future”.⁴⁷¹ Except when not denoting the future, in the literal English translation I render it as ‘will’, as most English-speaking Nubians do. Other possible translations would be ‘to be about to’ or ‘to intend to’.⁴⁷²

Both *aa* and *bi* precede the verb. As Andaandi and Mattokki do not have prefixes (except for kinship terms), both are written as separate words.⁴⁷³

Andaandi and Mattokki have converb constructions where two dependent verbs are connected, both mainly having the same subject, and only the final verb being inflected. It creates vivid descriptions. MASSENBACH 1933: §16F3 it “verbum conjunctum”.

Two main clauses are connected by the same clitic as two noun phrases, by bisyndetic =*gon* at the end of each main clause.⁴⁷⁴

-*gir* and its allomorph -*kir* (CAUS) denote causativity. It is attached to the verb root.⁴⁷⁵

In both Andaandi and Mattokki the verb in the imperative mood is sentence final and the singular usually remains unmarked.⁴⁷⁶ In Andaandi the

⁴⁷⁰ MASSENBACH 1933: §20.3, 131; in the German original: “die Absicht, die beginnende Handlung, die ganz nahe Zukunft”.

⁴⁷¹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2966 and AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 138. Therefore, JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015: 85 gloss it as FUT.

⁴⁷² Therefore, JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2016: 169 gloss it as INT.

⁴⁷³ That is in contrast to ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2967, MASSENBACH 1933: 20b, 131, and AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 138 who all write *bi* as a prefix. None of them explains why only in this case Nubian has a verbal prefix. MASSENBACH 1933: 20b, 131 lists one example sentence that shows that *bi* is more than a preverbal prefix: *bi-nebī-y-an-in* ‘he will become the prophet’. *bi* stands before a noun (*nebī*), and by making *bi* a prefix, noun and verb *an* belong to the same word. In the orthography of this thesis it would be *bi nebi anin*, clearly differentiating between noun and verb.

⁴⁷⁴ JAEGER 2014b: 109-112.

⁴⁷⁵ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4211; MASSENBACH 1933: §20.8, 132.

⁴⁷⁶ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2911.

suffix *-o*,⁴⁷⁷ and in Mattokki the suffix *-u*⁴⁷⁸ indicate politeness. In the plural, both attach *-we*.⁴⁷⁹

In Andaandi proverbs, there are three basic types of interrogative markers:

- a) Yes-No questions marked by *te* usually after the subject position (basically S Q V sentence structure).⁴⁸⁰
- b) Questions with particle *mingi* (Q:ACC) before the verb asking for an object.⁴⁸¹
- c) Questions with particle *minelle* expecting further explanations.⁴⁸²

In Mattokki, suffixes denoting a question are attached to the verb. Particles (written as separate words) expressing a question precede the verb. The interrogative clauses can be

- a) Yes-No questions in neutral or preterit tense marked by the suffixes *-na* and *-maa* respectively in sentence-final position. They basically have S O V Q sentence structure with a question suffix added to the verb.⁴⁸³ Among the proverbs, frequently these polar questions are rhetorical.
- b) Questions with particle *mingi* / *meekki* (Q:ACC) before the verb asking for an object.

⁴⁷⁷ Missing in Armbruster, based on my own language data.

⁴⁷⁸ MASSENBACH 1933: §16A, 124. While Massenbach mentions the IMP suffix *-u*, only AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 160 names it a ‘polite’ marker. However, he thinks the suffix is *-nu*, based on not recognising the NEG suffix *-min* preceding the polite marker in his Mattokki language examples.

⁴⁷⁹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2912; MASSENBACH 1933: §16A, 124; AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 160.

⁴⁸⁰ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4247. For a further discussion see proverb A7.10.

⁴⁸¹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §5131.

⁴⁸² ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4245.

⁴⁸³ MASSENBACH 1933: §18, 128-129. ARMBRUSTER 1960: §3051 gives *-a* as suffix for Yes-No questions. While *-na* occurs in 2SG and 3SG only, I gloss *-na* as one suffix, as Yes-No questions in Nubian proverbs mostly refer to 2SG and 3SG, and for reasons of clarity.

- c) Temporal questions with sentence initial particle *sittaagki* (Q:TMP; Q S O V sentence structure).⁴⁸⁴
- d) Locative questions with the sentence initial particle *saayir* (Q:LOC).⁴⁸⁵
- e) Questions with negative focus particle *me* (Q:NEG:FOC) preceding the verb (S Q V).⁴⁸⁶

3.11.2. Subordinate Clauses

In subordinate clauses, the preterit suffix changes from *-ko* to *-s* (Andaandi)⁴⁸⁷ and from *-s* to *-koo* (Mattokki).⁴⁸⁸ Different kinds of subordinate clauses occur in Nubian proverbs:

Conditional clauses marked by *-ki* (COND) frequently occur in Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs. Usually the conditional clause comes first followed by the affirmative simple clause in present tense, active affirmative mood. Also, usually the two actions of conditional clause and main clause are sequential. In a clause with *=on* (CO:COND) and *-ki* it is rendered as ‘if’, in a clause without *=on* mostly as ‘when’.⁴⁸⁹

Comparative clauses grading two actions or two noun phrases are represented by two clauses coordinated by *dogoor*, that can have two meanings:

- a) a postposition with the genitive case, meaning ‘above’ or ‘on top’.⁴⁹⁰
- b) a comparison with the genitive case, meaning ‘than’, marked by COMP.⁴⁹¹

Both occur in Mattokki proverbs, but only the last one in Andaandi proverbs. In Mattokki, two clauses to be compared are usually coordinated by *dogoor ... genma*, with *gen* meaning ‘better’.

⁴⁸⁴ MASSENBACH 1933: §10A, 115.

⁴⁸⁵ MASSENBACH 1933: §10B, 115.

⁴⁸⁶ Interrogative sentences of type b) and e) are missing in Massenbach’s and Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz’ grammar.

⁴⁸⁷ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§2949-2953: “past tense ... subjunctive”.

⁴⁸⁸ MASSENBACH 1933: §20.14, 133.

⁴⁸⁹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2998+§5398 and MASSENBACH 1933: §24, 139.

⁴⁹⁰ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 53 and MASSENBACH 1933: 157.

⁴⁹¹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4966 and AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 265.

Optative clauses: In Andaandi, *on* attached to the first nominal phrase plus the participle suffix *-el* attached to the verb expresses an exhortation, a desire or an oath (OPT). Cf. *ter-on nogmen-el*. – I wish he does not leave. Cf. *art-on ekki nall-el*. – I wish God cares about you. Cf. *enn nebi-on ekki tagir-el*. – I wish the prophet covers you.⁴⁹²

The same construction occurs in Mattokki,⁴⁹³ however, *on* may be omitted, as in *Artin missi ekki tagr-el*.⁴⁹⁴ ‘God’s eye may cover you.’

For an in-depth study of **relative clauses** in Andaandi, see JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015. The participles *-el* (perfective/PF) and *-il* (imperfective/IPF) in themselves do not mark a relative clause. They are one way of modifying a preceding noun phrase.⁴⁹⁵ The same goes for Mattokki: “Nubian does not have any relative pronouns or relative particles”;⁴⁹⁶ and “K[enzi] N[ubian] has restrictive relative clauses, which qualify the noun or the noun phrase they follow.”⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, in the proverb collection most of the time a participle clause immediately following the noun the clause refers to and marked by a final participle suffix, either ‘*-il*’, or ‘*-el*’ or ‘*-l*’ (after a vowel), will be translated as a relative clause.

Some subordinate **clauses of time** and of **concession** in Andaandi and in Mattokki are dealt with in AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ (1988: 267+269) and in more detail in JAEGER 2014b, both realised by the subordinate marker (SUB) *goon*.

⁴⁹² I thank Kamal Hussein for discussing that grammatical construction. The last sentence is a blessing, for example sung in wedding songs. According to ARMBRUSTER 1960: §5933, *-on* plus the participle “occurs in stereotyped formula”, however, that is not necessarily the case here. In some places (as in ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4398) where he refers to *-on*, he actually discusses *-gon*.

⁴⁹³ MASSENBAACH 1933: §25:2, 139.

⁴⁹⁴ MASSENBAACH 1933: §16D, 126. *on* would follow *Artin missi*.

⁴⁹⁵ JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015: 75.

⁴⁹⁶ MASSENBAACH 1933: 140. In the German original: “Das Nubische kennt keine Relativpronomen oder -partikeln.”

⁴⁹⁷ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 259. The term ‘restrictive relative clause’ is left undefined.

Altogether, in contemporary Nubian, Arabic subordinators (SUB) marking a subordinate clause are used more frequently than Nubian ones that are mainly placed at the end of a clause.

3.11.3. Case Marking

While the **nominative**, in active sentences marking the subject, remains unmarked, unlike in Nobiin,⁴⁹⁸ a number of other case markings are found in Andaandi and Mattokki, as ablative, accusative, adessive, allative, causative, comitative, genitive, instrumental, locative, and similitive case. With all these case markers I prefer the term ‘clitic’ instead of ‘suffix’, as in Nubian case markers are not only attached to nouns, but also to noun phrases and some even to subordinate clauses. In order to be consistent I attach case clitics to the last word of the noun phrase or subordinate clause they belong to.

Charles H. Armbruster uses the term ‘case’ covering nominative, accusative, genitive, and vocative.⁴⁹⁹ Information on other case clitics (which he does not call ‘case’) are spread in other parts of the grammar.

Without using the term ‘case’ G. von Massenbach has the most lucid summary of case clitics.⁵⁰⁰ At the time of writing, ‘case’ was mainly reserved for descriptions of European languages. Whether a clitic follows a noun phrase or a subordinate clause Massenbach calls it generally “post-position”.⁵⁰¹ Her terminology fits, as in European languages a preposition similarly precedes a noun phrase or a subordinate clause. Specifically she uses “Genetivpartikel” and “Objektpartikel”, leaving other clitics without a distinct term yet describing some of them.

Being the latest grammar on any Nile Nubian language Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz’ terms are closest to mine. While he speaks of “nominative”, “accusative”, “genitive”, “[l]ocative”, “[i]nstrumental”, and “[d]irectional”.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ In Nobiin the nominative case is sometimes marked by *-l* (WERNER 1987: 97; writing about the “Subjektkasus” – ‘subject case’).

⁴⁹⁹ ARMBRUSTER 1960, §§2446 ff. The accusative is named “objective”.

⁵⁰⁰ MASSENBACH (1933: §11, 115-119).

⁵⁰¹ MASSENBACH 1933: §11, 115+134.

⁵⁰² AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 90-100+219.

there are no examples of clitics attached to a noun phrase or a subordinate clause.

The function of the **adessive** (AD) is to “express ... the meaning of presence ‘at’ or ‘near’ a place”.⁵⁰³ In the literature it is written as *nār* and *nai* which I transcribe accordingly as =*nar* and =*nay*.⁵⁰⁴ In Mattokki and Andaandi proverbs it expresses especially a presence near a person.

Instead of **accusative** (ACC) Armbruster speaks of “objective case” and “adverbial including objective suffix”.⁵⁰⁵ For Massenbach it is an “Objekts-partikel”.⁵⁰⁶ In his Nobiin grammar Werner marks an “Objektkasus” by an “Objektkasussuffix”⁵⁰⁷ -*ga*. Only Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz writes “accusative case”.⁵⁰⁸ The hesitation of these researchers to call =*gi* accusative is intelligible as =*gi* in the Nile Nubian languages marks direct and indirect object, and =*gi* also occurs after temporal adverbs.

The function of the **allative** (ALL) is to “express the meaning of motion ‘to’ or ‘towards’”.⁵⁰⁹ Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz speaks of a “directional case” marked by =*gir* or =*gibir* and their allomorphs, with =*gir* occurring with non-animate nouns and pronouns only.⁵¹⁰

While Armbruster treats the **comitative** (COM) clitic as the instrumental clitic, e.g. separating =*gonon* into two morphemes, one objective marker -*gi* and a postposition -*on-on*,⁵¹¹ Massenbach calls it “Begleitung”.⁵¹² In his first list

⁵⁰³ CRYSTAL 2003: 10.

⁵⁰⁴ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§4304-4305; MASSENBACH 1933: §11Ac8, 117. Not mentioned in AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988.

⁵⁰⁵ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §2039; ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 79.

⁵⁰⁶ MASSENBACH 1933: §11Ab, 116; translated: ‘object particle’.

⁵⁰⁷ WERNER 1987: 97-101; translated: ‘object case’ and ‘object case suffix’.

⁵⁰⁸ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 91+219.

⁵⁰⁹ CRYSTAL 2003: 19.

⁵¹⁰ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 99. Not mentioned in Armbruster. Cf. MASSENBACH 1933: §11Ac4, 117.

⁵¹¹ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4347.

⁵¹² MASSENBACH 1933: §11c5, 117; translated: ‘accompaniment’.

of cases Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz omits the comitative, yet later adds the “comitative case” to his enumeration of Mattokki.⁵¹³

All three discuss the **genitive** (GEN) clitics =*n* and =*na* in passing. The dependent noun is marked and precedes the head noun.⁵¹⁴

The **instrumental** (INS) clitic is =*ged* and its allomorph =*ked*. In the Shelaal region variants are =*gen* and =*ken*.⁵¹⁵ Armbruster speaks of an “instrument” and derives it from *-gi+ed* with *-gi* the ‘objective case’ and *ed* having the meaning ‘to take’, explaining it as “taking an instrument”.⁵¹⁶ Massenbach writes “usually used for an agent or a tool”.⁵¹⁷ Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz employs the term “instrumental case”.⁵¹⁸ Unlike Massenbach, the instrumental clitic is not =*ged*=*ked*, but =*ken* and allomorphs.⁵¹⁹ When glossing the Mattokki instrumental case, I retain Massenbach, as that is the form I heard.

While the adessive, the allative, and the instrumental case can have locative meaning, there is a clitic reserved for the **locative** (LOC), with only Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz employing the term “locative case”.⁵²⁰ Locative clitics are =*r*=*ro* and their allomorphs =*ir*=*iro* usually after consonants.

The **ablative** does not have its own clitic. Instead, it is a combination of the locative (= *r*=*ro*) or the adessive (= *nar*=*nay*) followed by *toon*, meaning “from, to”.⁵²¹ Massenbach does not put any word boundary between the

⁵¹³ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 96+219.

⁵¹⁴ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§2465ff; MASSENBACH 1933: §11Aa, 116. AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ (1988: 94-95) speaks of ‘possessor’ instead of dependent noun.

⁵¹⁵ AHMED SOKARNO ABDEL-HAFIZ (1988: 97) does not specify the region.

⁵¹⁶ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4341. ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 61) separates =*ged* into a “postposition suffixed to objective case” meaning *gi+ed*.

⁵¹⁷ MASSENBACH 1933: §11Ac3, 117; in the German original “meist vom Mittel oder Werkzeug gebraucht”.

⁵¹⁸ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 97.

⁵¹⁹ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 97.

⁵²⁰ AHMED S. ABDEL-HAFIZ 1988: 96. ARMBRUSTER (1960: §4291), ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 166) and MASSENBACH (1933: §11Ac9, 117) discuss it to some extent.

⁵²¹ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 203 (*tōn* with optional lengthened vowel); MASSENBACH 1933: 218 (*tōn*).

locative clitic and *toon*, instead she analyses *r(o)toon* and its allomorphs as “Zusammensetzungen aus zwei einfachen Postpositionen”.⁵²² Unlike Massenbach I separate the two ‘postpositions’ (i.e. *ro toon* and *r toon*). Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz does not discuss this matter.

A simile uses an overt marker such as ‘like’, ‘similar to’ or a similar syntactical construction that is referred to as the **similative** (SIM) if attached to a noun phrase. Proverbs provide data to discover and analyse the syntactical construction of a simile. In Andaandi one morpheme represents the similative: =*kirii*.⁵²³ Mattokki =*kirii* has a wider range of meanings than its Andaandi counterpart, including ‘approximately’.⁵²⁴ In Mattokki, there is also =*nahad*, =*nawre*, *nawitte*, and *nawikke* which Massenbach lists in her dictionary.⁵²⁵ It is missing in Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz’s grammar. While the verb *galig* ‘to be like’ or ‘to resemble’ is similar, it does not represent the similative.

I close with a summary of the above discussed case clitics:

case	realised as
accusative	= <i>gi</i> , allomorph = <i>ki</i>
adessive	= <i>nar</i> (Andaandi) and = <i>nay</i> (Mattokki)
allative	= <i>gir</i> , allomorphs = <i>kir</i> and = <i>tir</i> ; = <i>gaddi</i> or = <i>gi addi</i> (Andaandi) and = <i>gabir</i> (Mattokki)
comitative	= <i>gonon</i> , allomorphs and variants = <i>konon</i> /= <i>kodon</i> (And./Mat.) and = <i>godon</i>
genitive	= <i>n</i> (both) and = <i>na</i> (Mattokki)
instrumental	= <i>ged</i> , allomorph = <i>ked</i> , variants = <i>ge</i> , = <i>ke</i> .

⁵²² MASSENBACH 1933: 118; translated: ‘compounds of two simple postpositions’.

⁵²³ Cf. ARMBRUSTER 1960: §§2539-2542; ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 123. While he writes the last vowel short, I have heard it lengthened.

⁵²⁴ MASSENBACH 1933: §11C17, 118.

⁵²⁵ MASSENBACH 1933: 200. =*nawre* is added by myself. While she writes every lexeme as a separate word, I write it as a clitic, except for *nawitte* and *nawikke*, as reading that as a separate word would be difficult for students of Nubian literacy.

case	realised as
locative	= <i>ro</i> , allomorphs = <i>lo</i> , = <i>do</i> (both) and = <i>r</i> (Andaandi). After <i>d</i> and <i>n</i> it is uttered as = <i>do</i> .
ablative	adessive or locative clitic plus <i>toon</i>
similative	= <i>kirii</i> and = <i>nahad</i> ; additionally in Mattokki; = <i>nawre</i> , <i>nawikke</i> , <i>nawitte</i>

3.11.4. Case Marking of Subordinate Clauses

Postpositions of nouns as described above may develop into clause linking morphemes or subordinators,⁵²⁶ as also observed in Andaandi and Mattokki:

Accusative (marked by [...]=ACC): The clitic =*gi* attached to a verb (and not to a participle) expresses some kind of fronted clause. Alternatively I could have glossed]=ACC as SUB. However, to show how some clitics and which clitics do not only follow noun phrases but also subclauses, I have chosen the first option.

Genitive (marked by [...]=GEN): The genitive clitics =*n* and =*na* attached to a verb mark the clause to a place, a time, or a comparison.⁵²⁷

Causative (marked by [...]=CAUS): Only in Mattokki proverbs is the causative clitic =*ged* (var. =*gad*) attached to verbs in temporal or causative subordinate clauses.⁵²⁸

Similative (marked by [...]=SIM) is next to nouns and noun phrases also attached to subordinate clauses, but this occurs only in Andaandi proverbs.

3.11.5. Discourse Marking

In everyday life a proverb is embedded in a situational context. While most of the Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs have been elicited outside of its

⁵²⁶ GENETTI 1991: 228-229. One could call them clitics as HASPELMATH 2022: 7. I prefer the term ‘subordinator’, as in Andaandi and Mattokki they usually follow the verb, as in other languages with predominant verb-final order.

⁵²⁷ MASSENBAACH 1933: §21A, 134; missing in Armbruster.

⁵²⁸ MASSENBAACH 1933: §21C4, 135. I do not follow her conclusions regarding the use of =*ged* and =*gad* as tense markers (cf. section 3.10.4). The CAUS clitic is not only missing in the Andaandi proverbs; also Armbruster does not discuss it.

argumentative discourse research participants were aware of some kind of context and sometimes related situations in which a proverb may occur.

With some proverbs the wider context is obvious. The cognitive effect of proverbs is similar to that of discourse markers.⁵²⁹ They strengthen an existing assumption or lead to its contradiction and elimination. Here, I am especially interested in proverbs where a marker is used for eliminating an existing expectation. In Andaandi and Mattokki two such markers are the coordinator clitic (CO) =*gon* and its allomorphs =*kon* and =*ton*,⁵³⁰ and the isolated Andaandi morpheme (CO) *men*, all of which take over this function.

While in the proverb collection the clitic =*gon* occurs monosyndetic and bisyndetic within coordinate constructions, I limit the discussion of =*gon* to monosyndetic coordination only, i.e. when it concludes the subject noun phrase that usually occurs sentence initially. It indicates an ongoing discourse, while other instances of =*gon* coordinate phrases or clauses within a proverb.

The “use of direct discourse makes the report or narrative more ‘vivid’, ‘dramatic’, or ‘theatrical’, and this has sometimes been claimed to be its essential function or ‘meaning’.”⁵³¹ In Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs direct speech or embedded reported speech has a similar function. They increase the proverb’s drama. In Andaandi, reported speech is marked by *e* if the addressee is unknown; and by *wetir* if the addressee is known.

3.11.6. Some further conventions

While in English ‘afraid’ belongs to the class of adjectives (ADJ), in Andaandi and Mattokki a few such ‘adjectives’ as *sandi*, especially the ones “referring to human propensities” turn out to be verbs (V).⁵³² When glossing I mark them with ‘be.’ as in: *genyi* ‘be.angry’ (Andaandi), *gij* ‘be.deaf’ (Mattokki), *gurre/gurree* ‘be.happy’, *howwilee* ‘be.astonished’ (Andaandi), *joree*

⁵²⁹ Cf. BLAKEMORE 2002: 95. He uses the term ‘assumption’ instead of ‘expectation’.

⁵³⁰ I analyse =*gon* as a clitic, as it can follow nominal phrases and verbal phrases.

⁵³¹ RUMSEY 1990: 347.

⁵³² As in some other languages. Cf. DIXON 2003: 4.

‘be.sad’ (Mattokki), *kitte* ‘be.silent’, *kudde* ‘be.pure’, *niis* ‘be.narrow’, *oddi* ‘be.ill’, *oroofe/orooke* ‘be.cold’, *sharke* ‘be.well’, *shiddii/shiddee* ‘be.healthy’.

keel usually means ‘border’, when preceded by the GEN it forms the superlative, as confirmed by Andaandi speakers. That construction is missing in standard Nubian grammars. Otherwise the superlative is formed by *mallen dogoor*: *im mallen dogoor sereen* ‘this is best of all’;⁵³³ with *dogoor* following the GEN.

The construction of a noun without preceding ACC clitic plus *kool* is interpreted as an adjective, with *kool* being an ADJR.⁵³⁴ I write the ACC clitic according to HĀMID KHABĪR (2016). As there is usually no corresponding adjective in English, it is rendered by ‘having’. While HĀMID KHABĪR (2016) oscillates between writing it as two words or one word, I interpret the ADJR as a suffix. By contrast, *koolan* occurs without preceding ACC clitic, is written as a separate word, and means ‘alone’.

The clitic =*weer* marks an indefinite noun (INDF). Depending on its environment, it is pronounced as *wee*. By contrast, *weer* as a separate word means ‘one’.

⁵³³ ARMBRUSTER 1960: §4968. For Mattokki see MASSENBAACH 1933: §8G, 113.

⁵³⁴ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2022, p.c.

4. Andaandi and Mattokki Wise Sayings and Proverbs

Nubian sociocultural traits have been shaped by the Nile Valley and its harsh desert climate. Proverbs and their metaphors are best understood within their environmental and cultural context; a simple list of proverbs is not sufficient. For this reason I classify the proverbs into 31 semantic domains, each forming one subchapter. The first semantic domain is the river Nile that together with dates (semantic domain 7) and women (semantic domain 15) form the three most important aspects relating to Nubians and Nubian life, as explained in a guided tour in the museum ‘Animalia’ on Elephantine Island where all guides are Nubian women. Unsurprisingly, the river Nile is mentioned in almost all semantic domains.

Each subchapter is introduced by a description of the domain’s background. Pre-20th century insights about Nubia are taken mainly from early travellers to Nubia, who reported from an outsider’s perspective. The earliest written insider sources are from the Mattokki Samuel Ali Hissein from the early 20th century. Nubian research participants provided the bulk of knowledge as experienced themselves or heard from their parents or grandparents, describing a time less than 80 years ago. Armgard Goo-Grauer’s observations from pre-*hijra* Nubia are added. The introduction of each semantic domain is followed by the Nubian proverbs belonging to that semantic domain, mainly collected in a non-Nubian speaking context due to the ongoing language shift. I close with puns, word plays, and words of special meanings that are found in Ḥāmid Khabīr’s proverb collection.

4.1. River

Nubia was like an oasis along the river Nile (*uru/essi duul*; lit. ‘big water’).⁵³⁵ One English traveller shortly before the *hijra* remembers that along the river Nile between Aswan and Wadi Halfa the whole atmosphere was very

⁵³⁵ When I offer two Nubian lexemes separated by ‘/’, usually the first one is Andaandi, the second one Mattokki. – MASSENBACH (1962: XII) assumes a relationship between the words *uru* meaning ‘river’ and *ur* ‘king’. I hear ‘king’ as *or* and do not consider that option further.

animated, never dull.⁵³⁶ Before the advent of modern means of transport, such as paved roads and regular bus services, the river Nile was the main connection to the outside world. Away from the river, with the exception of a few seasonal water courses (*jer*), the desert made human life impossible. “For the Nubians the desert immediately beyond the settlements was and remains a place of danger and evil spirits.”⁵³⁷ As a result, everything depended on the river Nile. It is “the symbolic and material locus of the Nubian Nile World ... the site of all major life rituals from birth to marriage and death.”⁵³⁸ Its “landscape is not only profuse in ancient material culture, but is the backdrop to the Nubians’ intangible heritage; it is an *associative landscape*.”⁵³⁹ This is why some non-Nubian Egyptians call a Nubian *ibn al-Nīl* (Arabic; literally: ‘son of the Nile’).⁵⁴⁰

The river was a place where Nubians met regularly. Mattokki growing up in Lower Nubia remember that each morning at sunrise the women went in groups from their homes down to the river to fetch water. Older women assigned the tasks to younger ones. One woman stood in the water, scooped and handed the jug filled with water to the next one. One Mattokki lady recollects her mother talking about going as far as her chest into the Nile water so that she could drink it. She knew the places for drawing quality drinking water. Nile water was only fetched where the river was in motion, with the best water to be found near a whirlpool (*sheema*). They needed to be careful as whirlpools could sink humans and boats. There were many of them next to a place called Berber, close to today’s West Sehel. Then they carried

⁵³⁶ Ann Bell 2019, p.c.

⁵³⁷ WERNER 2013: 366; in the German original: “Für die Nubier war und ist die Wüste, die direkt hinter den Siedlungen beginnt, ein Ort der Gefahr und der bösen Geister.” Further examples are provided in semantic domain 18 ‘Travel’.

⁵³⁸ GILMORE 2016: 86. OSSAMA A.W. ABDEL MEGUID (2015: 441-442) shows how birth, marriage and death are related to the river Nile.

⁵³⁹ ROWAN 2017: 185.

⁵⁴⁰ As Aḥmad ‘Ali 2018, p.c.

the jugs on their heads without needing hands for support. Babies clung on the side.⁵⁴¹

The Nile water is considered clean, “pure and holy”.⁵⁴² It is preferred for drinking even when an outsider explains the advantages of well water such as increased hygiene.⁵⁴³ The former is said not to taste salty. In one village in the Dongola Reach my wife observed a young boy riding on a donkey laden with four large containers filled with river water in spite of other water sources available. One Dongolawi remembers in his youth drinking from a water channel next to a donkey, neither humans nor animals actually got sick.⁵⁴⁴ By contrast, post-*hijra* Nubian inhabitants of the resettlement villages detested the well water from pumping stations due to its muddy taste.⁵⁴⁵

Due to the Nile environment, swimming (*bowwi*) was a necessary skill. In order to learn it, a pumpkin (*kebe/kebee*) was cut in half and hollowed out. Mainly boys were given its shell (*kashnaaba*) or a piece of wood (*kushmaane*) placed under one’s belly to keep afloat. Some Nubians were able to swim from the mainland river bank to the islands where they worked on the agricultural fields.⁵⁴⁶ Due to the distance of the river from the resettlement villages, nowadays fewer Egyptian Nubians learn to swim.

The Nile mud (*sibe/sibee*) enables arable farming and house-building. Its fertile mud is the source of some modest wealth:

⁵⁴¹ Sarah Muḥammad 2016, p.c.; Faḍl Aḥmad 2016, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2016, p.c.; Aḥmad ‘Ali 2019, p.c. The Nubian lexeme *sheema* is found in some place names, as the *neja* ‘Shêma’ in the *omadeya* Dehemiit (JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1932: 22).

⁵⁴² GILMORE 2016: 135; quoting the Fadijja novelist and member of the 2014/15 Egyptian constitution assembly HAGGAG HASSAN ODDOUL 2005.

⁵⁴³ Director of an NGO from the United States 2005, p.c. The well project in the Mahas region soon afterwards closed down. Differences in understanding purity played a role.

⁵⁴⁴ Fu’ād ‘Akūd 2016, p.c.

⁵⁴⁵ A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.

⁵⁴⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2018+2023, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c.; Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.

The life of [the] whole population of the Nile Valley, from the source to the mouth, has been associated with the river and its fertile valley.⁵⁴⁷

Another Mattokki living on an island in the Nile stated that the nature and the behaviour of a Nubian were determined by the Nile.⁵⁴⁸ When visiting a Nubian village close to the river for the first time I am still taken down to the river next to one's own agricultural land.

Before the building of high dams, farm work was regulated by the river's annual cycle of low tide in the season of *tuubar*, when the Nile water descends and becomes shallow at many places, and flood (*demiire/ demiira*). During low tide the river bed, its stones, and even its dirt became all too easily visible; in some places islands could even be reached by walking and holding up one's garment, without a boat.⁵⁴⁹ Very low water levels caused devastation, as in 1913 when the river Nile had its lowest level for 150 years and only one-fifth of all waterwheels could operate, causing serious food shortages.⁵⁵⁰

A strong flood could destroy and sink villages. During a visit to Imaani village north of Dongola town my host related that in 1946 and again in 1988 the village had been hit by a vast Nile flood. In 1988 the water stayed for so long that a boat plied to and from for almost three months. A number of inhabitants had to be evacuated.⁵⁵¹ The Nile flood in 1999 destroyed parts of Dongola town leaving the ruins still visible even a year later.

The river Nile not only created a degree of prosperity, but also engendered fear, as in a recollection about a childhood in a Fadijja Nubian village in the 1930s:

⁵⁴⁷ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 21. He was born prior to the *hijra*.

⁵⁴⁸ Aḥmad 'Ali 2015, p.c. The result, in his opinion, is that Nubians resettled to the desert, as happened in 1963/64, resulting in a change of culture and behaviour.

⁵⁴⁹ Muḥi 'Abd al-Fatāḥ (2019, p.c.) remembers older Egyptians Nubians talking about the time before the Aswan Dam was heightened in 1912: There were times when one could cross the river Nile on foot. The 1912 Aswan Dam heightening increased the level of the river Nile at Merwaw, making crossing the river at all times impossible. – The season/month of *tuubar/tuuba* is discussed in subchapter 5.4.

⁵⁵⁰ ENDERLIN 1918: 47.

⁵⁵¹ Anas Muḥi al-Dīn 2010, p.c.

The village elders would always warn us of dangers, which became more severe at flood time. “Never get too close to the Nile,” they said. Its northward flow would be fast and muddy. We listened fearfully for the loud sounds of the riverbank as it caved away and splashed heavily into the torrent. The River was violent and threatening then.⁵⁵²

The dangers associated with the river Nile were one reason why many children did not attend school in pre-*hijra* Lower Nubia. Despite not living that far from the nearest school, one Mattokki was not sent there, as the daily river crossing was considered too dangerous.⁵⁵³

The NubaTube channel developed by Egyptian Nubians includes a twenty-nine-part series on Nubian religion, history and stories under the title ‘Our Religion and Stories’ presented in Mattokki by the Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.⁵⁵⁴ There Nubian religious life is explained as being closely linked to the river Nile; one could consider it a spiritual relationship between the Nubians and the Nile. Beliefs dating back to pre-Islamic times revolved around Nile water spirits and angels of the Nile living deep in the river.⁵⁵⁵ They could be both male and female, allegedly more female.

Intermediaries, especially sheikhs (called *fegiir*), or sheikhas, would deliver messages or requests from humans to the angels of the Nile and vice-versa. If a girl fell in a fire and stayed unharmed, it was believed that the angels of the

⁵⁵² MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

⁵⁵³ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2018, p.c.

⁵⁵⁴ The sixth episode from which the following content is taken, is found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEO81ZwqyYA [last accessed on 5 November 2018].

⁵⁵⁵ *essin malaika(ri)* (MASSENBACH 1933: 194; KENNEDY 2005[1978]: 15, lit.: ‘angels of the water’), and similar the *mārēn burwī* (MASSENBACH 1933: 153; lit.: ‘daughters of the durra’) in Mattokki; both missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]. As a male researcher, Armbruster perhaps did not concern himself with this belief which belongs to the women’s sphere. Kamal Hussein (2018, p.c.) remembers both terms, the former one signifying beneficial or beautiful spirits, in contrast to the ugly *dogir* described next, and the second one being the designator of women singing at village weddings.

Most of the following information is taken from the fifth episode of the NubaTube series ‘Our Religion and Stories’: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB3a14m9kN4 [last accessed on 5 November 2018].

Nile had rescued her. Later she might become an intermediary, performing her task for example by dreaming.

Women in particular asked the angels of the Nile to bless a wedding, to take away barrenness, for protection from diseases, during the month before childbirth, after birth, the day of a child's circumcision, during mourning, and the Day of Ashura, the tenth day of the Islamic month Muharram.

The *dogir*, another mythical Nile spirit, was a source of mainly causing fright. Such fear was considered a helpful educational method to keep children away from the river Nile and its dangers. It was believed that monsters (*irkaab*) were living in the water near Kalaabshe Gate.⁵⁵⁶ They had tails that they hid, spoke Arabic and Nubian. Such stories could have easily arisen to explain boat accidents as at Kalaabshe Gate. It shifted the responsibility to an outside source.

Until the *hijra* good and evil Nile spirits were pacified by giving presents, such as food, perfume, henna, or eyeliner. Food was left at that bank of the river Nile. Exchanges also happened at *zaar* ceremonies.⁵⁵⁷

In the Dongola Reach inhabitants also believed in the existence of the *dogir*. They were unseen, could be male or female, partly looking like a fish. Elderly Nubians from the area close to Old Dongola remember village communal meals (Ar. loanword *karaama*) where some food was placed for the *dogir*. By the next morning the food had vanished.⁵⁵⁸

The birthday celebration of a Muslim saint, a *mūlid*, nowadays rarely performed, keeps pre-Islamic traditions alive. One Mattokki recollects that during one *mūlid* performed some decades ago the sheikh's clothes were pulled through the Nile water, then wrung. By drinking the dripping water one hoped to be able to participate in the sheikh's blessing (Ar. *baraka*).⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ Kamal Hussein 2018, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2016, p.c.

⁵⁵⁷ TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 233: "ritual of sacrifices, incantations, drumming and dancing performed for the purpose of appeasing a spirit by which a person is possessed"

⁵⁵⁸ Hāmid Khabīr 2019, p.c. He assumes that the food had been eaten by wild animals.

⁵⁵⁹ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2016, p.c.

Also on the Day of Ashura the Nile water was a symbol of sacredness. Children were immersed in the river, allegedly bringing blessing on them.⁵⁶⁰

The water of the river Nile is nearly always in motion; a smooth surface is rare. It never freezes (*meer*). The coldest temperature I have encountered in the Dongola Reach was about four degrees, in January 2002. It was a sensation much talked about afterwards. Still, from travelling merchants and mystics they must have heard of frozen water.⁵⁶¹ Also, some Dongolawi assume that snow occurred in a non-specified past and became part of proverbial metaphors.

Nowadays, the life style prior to the *hijra* would be called ‘eco-friendly’:

... the Nubians lived a life integrated with their river: they loved it and feared it and did not pollute it and the river reciprocated and gave love in exchange for love, and friendship in exchange for friendship, ...⁵⁶²

In conversations in Arabic, Nubians call both the river and the sea *baħr*, for both are wide and there are no means to hold it back. Such an understanding of an unstoppable river changed only with the construction of the first Aswan Dam and later the Nile water treaty of 1929 drawn up by Egypt and the Sudan under the influence of their colonial rulers.⁵⁶³ From 1902 onward most inhabitants of Lower Nubia had to leave their homes each time the Aswan Dam was heightened, a most traumatic event, as described by those who experienced it themselves. Samuel Ali Hissein reported about the effects of the 1902 Dam building:

The end is at a place called Wadi el Kunus, the Valley of Treasures. Alas, it no longer deserves such a name full of promise! Ten years ago,

⁵⁶⁰ Mother of the Dongolawi artist Amado Alfadni 2023, p.c.

⁵⁶¹ I thank Anne Storch (2022, p.c.) for pointing this out.

⁵⁶² GILMORE 2016: 110; quoting the Nubian writer Mukhtar’s novel ‘Jibāl al-Kohl: Riwāya Men al-Nūba’ (2001: 158). Without knowing anything about modern means of waste management Nubians hardly ever produced any garbage. Almost everything that was not biologically degradable was recycled.

⁵⁶³ HERZOG 1957a: 140, referring to Nubia prior to the *hijra*. This law concerned the region not affected by the raising of the Aswan Dam in 1933 (A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.). Even today both governments of the Sudan and of Egypt control the use of the Nile water.

or even further back, this valley was indeed, and in the fullest sense of the word, a valley of treasures; not that it concealed within it gold, silver or copper, no, but health, beauty, a great variety of riches in terms of ancient monuments and natural beauty. It was a hidden paradise. ... And now – my eyes became dim, my thoughts confused and appalled, on beholding the destruction, the desolation and the grief – everywhere, on both banks of the river. All this misery has its origin in the great [Aswan] dam and the piling up of the flood waters. They have washed away the evergreen banks, leaving behind nothing but sterile ground and boulders. And alas, it is not just the lament of nature that we see – the pretty, friendly human habitations at the foot of the hills are as if melted to nothing. These houses were not just pleasant, homely places of security for their owners, but the most charming ornamentation of the naked, sterile cliffs. The footpath along the Nile has been completely destroyed, covered by the crumbling masonry of the remains of the houses, so it can hardly be traced. The innumerable palm trees enhancing life with their golden-brown fruits, with the refreshing, invigorating, cooling shade of their tender, evergreen leaves and branches, once a sight for sore eyes – each of their leaves, each branch, speaks of imminent death. There all these trees stand, shrouded in infinite woe. Whoever observes them can only compare them with a regiment of military police: the crown yellowish brown, leaves and branches khaki yellow. Indeed, all the priceless trees with their aroma of paradise are withering inexorably away to their doom. Who has inflicted such a plague on this innocent, useful growth? God? No! Angels? Likewise no! Satan? Of course not! So who is this monstrous being? It is man; and such is his intention, to provide wealth, life and affluence to some, by exposing others to ruin, destruction and death, in order to turn their land into an enormous reservoir. If it had been absolutely and unavoidably necessary, then it would be justified and a blessing! For the Wadi el Kunus it means a gradual disappearance of

people, animals and plants. It began five years ago, and continues to this day, this deathly struggle!⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1909: 13. I include such a long quote as the source is difficult to trace, only available in German, and the author is a Nubian. In further semantic domains I will add more quotes from the same lament. – In the German original: “Man nennt dieses Ende Wady el Kunus, das Tal der Schätze. Ach, es verdient diesen verheißungsvollen Namen nicht mehr! Vor zehn Jahren, oder länger noch, war dieses Tal tatsächlich und in des Wortes vollster Bedeutung ein Tal der Schätze; nicht daß es Gold, Silber oder Kupfer in sich barg, nein, aber Gesundheit, Schönheit, abwechslungsreichen Reichtum an uralten Baudenkmalern und an Naturschönheit. Es war ein verborgenes Paradies. ... Und jetzt - meine Augen wurden trübe, meine Gedanken verwirrten und entsetzten sich, die Zerstörung, die Trostlosigkeit und den Jammer zu sehen - überall zu beiden Seiten des Ufers. All das Elend ist durch den grossen Damm entstanden und die aufgedämmten Wasserfluten. Sie haben die immergrünen Ufer hinweggespült und nichts als unfruchtbaren Felsboden und Geröll zurückgelassen. Ach, und nicht nur die Natur müssen wir trauern sehen - auch die hübschen, freundlichen und menschlichen Wohnstätten am Fuße der Berge sind wie dahingeschmolzen. Diese Häuser waren nicht nur gute, wohnliche Zufluchtsstätten für ihre Eigentümer, sondern der anmutigste Schmuck der nackten, unfruchtbaren Felsen. Der am Nil entlang führende Fußweg ist ganz zerstört, durch das herabbröckelnde Gemäuer der einstigen Häuser, so daß er kaum zu finden ist. Die unzähligen Palmenbäume, welche Leben spendeten mit ihren süßen, goldbraunen Früchten, mit dem erfrischenden, stärkenden, kühlenden Schatten ihrer zarten, immergrünen Blätter und Zweige, an welchen das Auge sich erholen konnte - jedes Blatt, jeder Zweig derselben spricht von nahendem Sterben. Alle diese Bäume stehen da, eingehüllt in unendliches Weh und Todeskleid. Wer sie ansieht, kann nicht anders, als sie mit einem Regiment Polizeisoldaten vergleichen: Die Krone gelbbraunlich, Blätter und Zweige gelb wie Kaki. Ja, alle köstlichen, paradiesisch duftenden Bäume welken unaufhaltsam ihrem Untergang entgegen. Wer hat auf diese unschuldigen, nützlichen Gewächse solche Plage gebracht? Gott? Nein! Engel? Ebenfalls nein! Satan? Durchaus nicht! Wer denn ist dieses ungeheuerliche Wesen? Es ist der Mensch; und auf solchem Wege beabsichtigt er, den einen Reichtum, Leben und Wohlstand zu bringen, indem er die andern dem Verderben, dem Untergang und dem Tode preisgibt, damit, daß er ihr Land zu einem großen Stausee macht. Wenn es unumgänglich nötig gewesen wäre, dann wäre es berechtigt und ein Segen! Es bedeutet im Wadi el Kunus ein allmähliches Dahinsterben des Volkes, der Tiere und der Pflanzen. Vor fünf Jahren begann er, und dauert bis heute, dieser Todeskampf!”

One wonders if such a lament is the result of the author being a Nubian. However, a German princess travelling four years later the same way, after the first heightening of the Aswan Dam in 1912, writes similarly:

The 8-day journey to Halfa ... was full of interest for me, ... The consequences of heightening the [Aswan] dam are very apparent as far as Korosko; and the route takes one past woods of palm trees standing in the water, none of which bear fruit anymore, and will probably be gone in two years' time. The inhabitants have had to leave their old homes and build new houses higher up in the desert, the terrain consisting all too often of only mere stones and rocks, impossible to cultivate. The sadness of these impressions is yet greater on hearing that the Kenuzi people were paid off by the government with compensation of £1, whereas the annual income from just one palm can amount to £2-3. Compensation for the land was dealt with in a similar manner, despite the fact that it was partly so productive that measurements for selling it were calculated by the length of a foot and the width of a hand. One can scarcely comprehend how the people in that stony region can survive, once the capital of the compensation, not all of which has been received yet, is used up. Meanwhile the government is making attempts to settle the people in Dongola in the Sudan, where about 2,000-3,000 able farmers are needed, because of depopulation during the wars.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶⁵ ZU HOHENLOHE. 1913: 45-46; in the German original: "Sehr interessante Tage waren für mich die achttägige Reise ... nach Halfa, ... Die Folgen der Erhöhung des Staudamms machen sich bis Korosko hin geltend; und man fährt an Palmenwäldern vorbei, die im Wasser stehen, von denen kein Baum mehr Frucht trägt und wohl kaum einer noch nach zwei Jahren stehen wird. Die Bewohner haben ihre alten Wohnungen verlassen müssen und neue Häuser höher hinauf in die Wüste gebaut, wo nur zu oft bloßer Felsen vorhanden ist, der keinerlei Feldanbau ermöglicht. Noch trauriger wirken diese Eindrücke, wenn man hört, daß die Kenussileute mit einer Entschädigungssumme von 1 £ von der Regierung abgefunden worden sind, während allein der jährliche Ertrag einer Palme 2-3 £ betragen kann. Ähnlich ist die Entschädigung für den Boden gehandhabt worden, der teilweise so fruchtbar war, daß die Leute ihn beim Verkauf mit Fußlängen und Spannweiten der Hand abmaßen. Es ist kaum verständlich, wovon die Leute in der felsigen Gegend leben können, wenn erst das Kapital der Entschädigungssumme, die sie zum Teil noch nicht erhalten haben,

For inhabitants of Merwaw the 1933 heightening was especially traumatic. They had not been properly informed about the water rising. As they slept, water suddenly intruded their homes. They quickly took their belongings and ran up higher into the hills surrounding the hamlets and villages. Later, some of the inhabitants of Merwaw moved to Abuhoor, Gurte, Meriye, Seyaale, West Aswan, wherever each one found a place for agriculture.⁵⁶⁶

The final and last move for Egyptian Nubians came in 1963/64. When departing at least in one village the Mattokki women said goodbye to the angels of the Nile. Shortly after the *hijra* some Nubians walked long distances from their new homes to the river to present food to the angels of the Nile, thus ensuring their benevolence.⁵⁶⁷

Once, in the General Nubian club in Cairo, a film was presented that included scenes from the *hijra*, right after the arrival in the resettlement villages.⁵⁶⁸ The Nubians filmed are wondering in Mattokki: *essin gaar saayree?* ‘Where is the river bank?’ – Of course, the Arab film-makers and the audience to whom the film was originally intended did not understand.

Without the river the Nubian community’s focal point of life was lost, also their religious symbols, a grave bereavement. Public water taps installed by the government were a poor substitute for the river. Some months after their arrival Nubians even had to pay for the water that until the *hijra* had been free of charge.⁵⁶⁹ It confirmed Haggag Hassan Oddoul’s proposition that the river and Nubian culture are tightly intertwined. Since 2009 the construction of the Merowe High Dam near Karima has had a similar impact on the Dongolawi in the Dongola Reach.

aufgezehrt sein wird. Indessen macht die Regierung Versuche, die Leute im Sudan, namentlich in Dongola anzusiedeln, wo sie ca. 2000-3000 tüchtige Landbebauer braucht, da das Land von den Kriegen her noch entvölkert ist.”

⁵⁶⁶ Muhi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2019, p.c.

⁵⁶⁷ Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz 2015, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.

⁵⁶⁸ In 2014. I consider the film to be authentic as the Egyptian director of the film had an Arabic-speaking audience in mind, not understanding the Nubian texts.

⁵⁶⁹ ‘Abdu al-Sunni 2016, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.

The following proverbs may recreate some aspects of living along a life-giving river, nowadays in Lower Nubia submerged by Lake Nasser/Nubia.⁵⁷⁰

It is assumed that the closer the average Nubian speaker lives to the river Nile the higher the likelihood that proverbs are remembered.⁵⁷¹ Khannaag village where the collector of proverbs Ḥāmid Khabīr lives is relatively close to the river. He begins his own collection with five proverbs dealing with the river.

A1.1 ⁵⁷² ΟΥΡΟΥΓΕΔ ΤΑΚΟΝ.

uruged taakon.

uru=ged taar-ko-n

river=INS come-PRT1-3SG

He came with the river.

⇒ He is unknown.

⇒ He is a stranger who after coming to the village causes problems.

A1.2 ⁵⁷³ ΟΥΡΟΥΡ ΤΩΝ ΒΕΛ ΤΑΚΟΝ.

urur toon bel taakon.

uru=r toon bel taar-ko-n

river=LOC from exit come-PRT1-3SG

He came out of the river.

⇒ The stranger causes fear.

⇒ He comes suddenly.

A Nubian who “came out of the river” or “entered the river” came from the place of the Nile spirits or went to it, comparing that person to the Nile spirits.

⁵⁷⁰ Some Nubians prefer Lake Nasser to be called Lake Nubia. The first designation refers to its builder, the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, the second one to the region now flooded.

⁵⁷¹ Anas Muḥi al-Dīn 2018, p.c.

⁵⁷² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 1); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⁵⁷³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 2); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Fādi Ibrāhīm. Compare the fear a water-angel caused.

A1.3 ⁵⁷⁴ *ΟΥΡΟΥΡ ΤΩ!*
urur too!
uru=r toor-Ø
 river=LOC enter-IMP:SG
 Enter/Go into the river!

- ⇒ You did/said something bad.
 ⇒ Go to hell!

A1.4 ⁵⁷⁵ *ΟΥΡΟΥ ΑΝ ΩΙΔΕΚΟΝ.*
uru an widekon.
uru an wide-ko-n
 river INCH return-PRT1-3SG
 He returned to become a river.

- ⇒ He received lots of good things (e.g. crops and corn).

A1.5 ⁵⁷⁶ *ΟΥΡΟΥΓΙ ΜΙΡΙΝ.*
urugi miirin.
uru=gi miir-in
 river=ACC hold.back-3SG
 He holds the river back.

- ⇒ His actions are beneficial.
 ⇒ He makes many mistakes, much talking, much lying.

The proverb is used in a positive as well as in a negative sense.

⁵⁷⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 3); co-investigated with Fādi Ibrāhīm.

⁵⁷⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 4); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. When speaking Ḥamid Khabīr contracts *widekon* to *wedkon*.

⁵⁷⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 5); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Fu'ād 'Akūd.

A1.6 ⁵⁷⁷ *ḤUTTA EKKI MĪPĪN.**hutta ekki miirin.**hutta er=gi miir-in*

sea 2SG=ACC hold.back-3SG

The sea holds you back.

hutta starts with *h*, otherwise rare in Nubian. It is unknown by the younger generation, also missing in ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]).⇒ As we are quarrelling, may *Allāh* create distance between you and me.

⇒ May there be the sea between us, so that you go away.

⇒ I realise something powerful and want it to disappear.

Nubians interested in their history feel close to Moses, whom they call *Mūsa* as in the *Qur'ān*. They claim that *Mūsa*'s mother was a Nubian and that he was born in Nubia.⁵⁷⁸ There are also other histories related to *Mūsa*. The proverb is said to have been uttered first by the prophet *Mūsa* when, after leaving Egypt, Pharaoh was chasing him and nearing the Israelites.⁵⁷⁹

variant *hutta ekki [annar] miirel.*

It is the sea that holds you back [from me].

A1.7 ⁵⁸⁰ *ΟΥΡΟΥΡ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡ!**urur undur!*

⁵⁷⁷ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 15); co-investigated with Abu Bakr Khayri, Fādi Ibrāhīm; variants from Sāmi 'Abdallah, Akram Ḥasan, and 'Awaḍ Ḥasan.

⁵⁷⁸ E.g. inhabitants of Dembo village 2003, p.c., one of the most southern villages in the Dongola Reach; Aḥmad 'Ali from Elephantine Island 2017, p.c., one of the most northern villages in Lower Nubia. – The 1st century AD author FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (1983: second book, tenth chapter) connects Moses and Kush/Nubia with each other.

⁵⁷⁹ Akram Ḥasan heard the religious connotation from his mother. It is based on the Bible, Old Testament, Exodus 14:27; and the *Qur'ān* (Surah 20: 78-80). In both texts, Moses/*Mūsā* does not speak; in the biblical text, he stretches out his hand.

⁵⁸⁰ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi; co-investigated with Fādi Ibrāhīm.

uru=r undur-Ø
 river=LOC put.in-IMP:SG
 Put into the river!

- ⇒ Don't worry about it!
 ⇒ Keep it for yourself, don't pass it on!

A1.8 ⁵⁸¹ *CEPEFI āw, OYPOYP TIP!*

seregi aaw, urur tir!

sere=gi aaw-Ø uru=r tir-Ø
 good=ACC make-IMP:SG river=LOC give-IMP:SG

sere Usually something that is of no value is thrown into the river.
 The proverb encourages a different behaviour.

Do the good and give it into the river!

- ⇒ The good you do will come back to you.
 ⇒ The river carries all the good.
 ⇒ Do the good as it is morally the right thing, not because you will get a recompense from someone.
 ⇒ Do the good even if people do not value it and you receive no immediate return. God will definitely appreciate it and you may receive a return, however, how and when is unknown.
 ⇒ I understand that you have a different opinion or want to do it in a different way. Just do it as you want to do it.

variant *seregi aawil, urur tirin.*

The one who does the good gives it into the river.

⁵⁸¹ From 'Abd al-Bāšit Hāj, Shebatood; co-investigated with Fādi Ibrāhīm; variant from Aḥmad Hamza. Kamal Hussein replaces the LOC clitic in *uru=r* by the ACC: *uru=gi*.

A1.9 ⁵⁸² ΟΥΡΟΥΓΙ ΝΑΛΜΕΝΕΛ, ΜΕΡΕΡ ΚΙΔΔΙΝ.
urugi nalmenel, merer kiddin.
uru=gi nal-men-el mere=r kiddi-n
 river=ACC see-NEG-PTC:PF pond=LOC drown-3SG
 The one who did not see the river drowns in the pond.

mere a pond is less deep than the river Nile.

⇒ He first lived as a pauper, then suddenly became wealthy and now does not know what to do with his wealth.

Someone who is getting wealthy is expected to be generous. However, the person the proverb describes does not behave according to this sociocultural trait.

A1.10 ⁵⁸³ ΑΔΕΜ ΚΙΔΔΙ ΒΟΨΛ ΟΥΡΟΥΝ ΓΟΥΜΜΟΥΔΤΙ ΑΡΙΝ.
adem kiddi buul urun gummudti aarin.
adem kiddi buu-il ...
 human drown STAT-PTC:IPF
uru=n gummud=gi aar-in
 river=GEN foam=ACC grab-3SG

A drowning human grabs [even] the foam of the river.

<verb> *buu* is regarded as a converb construction and not as a verb plus suffix, as the clitic *te* may occur between the verb and *buu*.
 <verb> *buul* is translated as an adjective where possible.⁵⁸⁴

⇒ When a problem occurs every possible solution is tried.

⇒ He is in great need.

variant *kiddedolil, kashshi mallegi aarin.*

The one who is about to drown grabs every stalk.

⁵⁸² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 69; and 2016: proverb 68); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein, Fādi Ibrāhīm.

⁵⁸³ From ‘Abd al-Raūf, Old Dongola; co-investigated with Fu‘ād ‘Akūd, Fādi Ibrāhīm; variant from Aḥmad Hamza.

⁵⁸⁴ A biverbal construction would not include *buul* (e.g. *buu* with participle). By contrast, Kamal Hussein considers <verb> *buu* as verb plus suffix.

English: A drowning man clutches at a straw.

A1.11 ⁵⁸⁵ *ΟΥΡΟΥ ΒΘΔΚΙΝ, ΤΕΝΝ ΚΟΡΟΡ ΩΑΝΔΙΝ.*

uru boodkin, tenn koroor waandin.

uru bood-ki-n tenn koroor waandi-n
 river run-COND-3SG 3SG:POSSwaste appear-3SG

When the river withdraws [at low tide], its waste appears.

⇒ If someone becomes old/ill his true personality will appear.

⇒ When someone leaves his bad deeds will become known.⁵⁸⁶

⇒ While a ruler governs nothing negative can be said about him, only after he steps down.

⇒ A friendship with a wealthy person ends when he becomes poor.

A1.12 ⁵⁸⁷ *ΕCΚΙ ΚΟΥΤΤΙ ΔΝΚΙΝ, ΩΕΛΛΙ ΤΩΥΒΙΡΑΝ.*

essi kutti ankin, welli tuubiran.

essi kutti an-ki-n wel-li tuub-r-an
 water shallow INCH-COND-3SG dog-PL wade-NEUT-3PL

When the water [river] becomes shallow, the dogs wade [in it].

essi stands for the good, especially for good people.

wel A dog's traces are not visible in water but in mud.

⁵⁸⁵ From MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF, Shebatood; co-investigated with ‘Umar Aḥmad, Fādi Ibrāhīm.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. “The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interrèd with their bones” is a quote spoken by Mark Antony in William Shakespeare’s play Julius Caesar. poemanalysis.com/shakespeare-quotes [last accessed on 29 November 2023]

⁵⁸⁷ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 6) and TAHA 2011 with revised orthography. It is one of the most frequently mentioned proverbs. It was cited by and co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, ‘Ammār Ya‘qūb, Mu‘amr al-Fīl, Fu‘ād ‘Akūd, Aḥmad Hamza, Samira El-Melik-Ziadah, Fādi Ibrāhīm. Also co-investigated with Aḥmad Sāti who adds the conditional coordinator =on after the first word, beginning the sentence with *esson*. Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s interpretation is the second last one, Taha’s the last one. His interpretation has not been supported by any other Andaandi speaker thus far. The variant is from AMNA MUṢṬAFA.

- ⇒ When the number of good inhabitants of a village decreases (just as water becomes shallow), lying and evil deeds increase.
- ⇒ He is telling a lie, and it will become obvious.
- ⇒ A family that lacks integrity gives other people, especially malicious people, the opportunity to intervene in the family's affairs and further aggravate the situation.
- ⇒ If you are too easy-going, people will take advantage of you (i.e. they will exploit you to your disadvantage).
- ⇒ Bad people reveal themselves at night.
- ⇒ In the past such a task was difficult, these days it has become easy so that everyone can do it.
- ⇒ When politics is difficult (as traversing non-shallow water) it needs people with special skills. When politics becomes easy (as traversing shallow water) anybody can do it.
- ⇒ Who underestimates others, will himself be underestimated.
- ⇒ If the husband becomes ill his old wife does what she wants.
- ⇒ She is an immoral woman with a bad reputation who will end up promiscuous.
- ⇒ If you do not take care of your belongings, bad people will turn up and take it away.
- variant *malti kutti aagkin, wel tooni teddo tuubiran.*
If the channel becomes shallow, the puppies wade in it.

A1.13 ⁵⁸⁸ *ΕCCI ΩΟΥΓΟΥΡΚΙΝ, ΚΟΥΛΟΥ Ω̄ΑΝΔΙΝ.*
essi shugurkin, kulu waandin.
essi shugur-ki-n kulu waandi-n
water descend-COND-3SG stone appear-3SG
When the water descends [after the flood], the stone appears [becomes visible].

⁵⁸⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 83; and 2016: proverb 82); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; variant from MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF.

essi shugurkin denotes the same time as the season of *tuubar*

⇒ His weaknesses become all too easily visible.

English: When the tide goes out we find out who is swimming naked.

A1.14 ⁵⁸⁹ *ΚΟΥΚΚΙ ΤΟΥΒΑΡΡΟ ΩΔΑΝΔΙΝ.*

kuukki tuubarro waandin.

kuukki *tuub-ar=ro* *waandi-n*
<men's.disease> wade-NR=LOC appear-3SG

The men's skin disease appears in the 'wading'/*tuubar* season.

kuukki is not generally known among Andaandi speakers. It is a male skin disease at the leg that may lead to swollen testicles and penis. It becomes visible when one pulls up one's clothes or during sexual intercourse. Here it symbolises the dirt that is only visible right after the flood has receded.

⇒ He behaves differently in public than in private.

A1.15 ⁵⁹⁰ *ΔΕΜΙΡΕΝ ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓΚΙΡΙΝ.*

demiiren turugkiriin.

demiire=n *turug=kirii-n*
Nile.flood=GEN wind=SIM-COP

He is similar to the [strong] wind of the Nile flood.

demiiren turug The wind during the time of the Nile flood carries a lot of sand with it and changes frequently, sometimes even at short intervals.

⇒ He is constantly changing his mind.

⇒ The environment is strong and dark. That is why he is not quite sure.

⁵⁸⁹ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with 'Alā al-Dīn Khayri.

⁵⁹⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 18); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Fādi Ibrāhīm.

A1.16 ⁵⁹¹ *ECCIFI MĒPKIPIN.**essigi meerkirin.**essi=gi meer-gir-in*

water=ACC freeze-CAUS-3SG

He causes water to freeze.

meer usually means ‘to form a smooth surface’. Here, it specifically means ‘to freeze’. As the weather in Nubia is nearly always hot or very hot, water is unlikely to freeze.

⇒ He can do the impossible.

⇒ He uses magic.

⇒ He stops sending money regularly to his family.

The proverb is mainly said about a so-called Sufi mystic or ‘holy man’ -(Ar. *faḡīr*) who writes *Qur’ānic* verses on parchment. The writings of a powerful holy man on an amulet are said to bring protection and healing. Saying the proverb about a holy man is a positive recommendation.

The meaning of A1.16 is different from A25.4 where non-Islamic magic is openly rejected.

A1.17 ⁵⁹² *ECCIFONFI TAKKAP EN MĪPAN.**essigongi takkar en miiran.**essi=gon=gi takkar e-n mii-r-an*

water=CO=ACC narrow be-3SG hinder-NEUT-3PL

And they hinder the water while it is narrow.

⇒ A problem must be solved while it is still small. Later a solution becomes as difficult as stopping the wide river Nile.

⇒ Educate and train your child while it is still young.

⁵⁹¹ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 40); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Fādi Ibrāhīm.

⁵⁹² From Muḡammad Šālih, Seleem 3; co-investigated with Fādi Ibrāhīm.

M1.1 ⁵⁹³ *ΕCCT ΔΟΥΛΛΟ, ΤΕΝΔΟ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΚΙ, Α ΒΑΔΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*
essi duullo, tendo toon aarki, aa baajmunu.
essi duul=ro ten=ro toon aar-ki-Ø ...
 river=LOC 3SG:POSS=LOC from take-COND-2SG
aag baaj-munu
 PROG be.finished-NEG

In the river, when you take [a bit] from it, it is not finished.

baaj Besides ‘to write’ in other contexts it can be rendered as ‘to divorce’, ‘to be finished’, ‘to light a fire’, and ‘to rise’.

⇒ You are wealthy, yet not generous and do not give to other people when asked.

English: It’s a drop in a bucket.

variant *essi duullo tendo toon aargi, aa bashmunu.*

Taking from the river, it does not split [it remains the Nile].

M1.2 ⁵⁹⁴ *ΕCCT ΔΟΥΛ ΟΥΜΟΥΡΡΟ ΧΟΡ ΑΓΚΟΜΝΟΥ.*
essi duul umurro xoor aagkoomnu.
essi duul umur=ro xoor aag-koo-munu
 river life.time=LOC seasonal.stream PROG-PRT1-NEG

The river in its life time never became a seasonal stream.

xoor (Ar. loanword) describes a seasonal stream(bed), that carries water in and shortly after the flood season, or after a rainfall. A walk from one hamlet to the next often included a detour around a *xoor*.

⇒ The person who has become important will not lose his elevated status.

⁵⁹³ From St30; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki; variant from MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI / A. GOO-GRAUER.

⁵⁹⁴ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Muḥammad Mīrghani, Dahab Ḥisayn, Faḍl Aḥmad, Muḥarram Maḥmūd; also A. Goo-Grauer. The proverb is part of lyrics written by the late Mattokki poet ‘Abdu Mīrghani and performed by the late Mattokki singer Ḥasan Ghazūli.

- ⇒ A good person will not become evil. Instead, when hurt he will forgive.
- ⇒ A argues that X is a good person. B contradicts. The proverb is said to strengthen A's statement.
- ⇒ The important person does not deal with unimportant matters.

The proverb is said to originate from a time when the construction of massive dams was still unknown. During the building of the Aswan High Dam “Stories were told of how Egyptian farmers had learnt to fear, adapt to and anticipate the Nile, but never had the power to control it.”⁵⁹⁵ These days, it would be possible to stop the river's flow completely.

M1.3 ⁵⁹⁶ *ΕCCT ΔΟΥΛ ἄ ΜΙΡΝΑ, ΟΥΜΜΑ ΝΙΡΑΝ ΓΕΔΔΙΓΙ.*

essi duul aa miirna, umma niiran geddiggi.

essi duul aag miir-na ...

river PROG hinder-NEG

umma nii-r-an geddi=gi

community drink-NEUT-3PL as.much.as=ACC

The river does not hinder, the community drinks as much as (it wants).

-na local variant of NEG suffix *-munu* in the Shellal area.

- ⇒ I will not be influenced by people who denigrate you and will stick by you.

M1.4 ⁵⁹⁷ *ΕCCT ΔΟΥΛ ΔΙΓΡΙΚΙ Ιἄ ΜΟΝΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

essi duul digriiki yaa moonmunu.

essi duul digrii=gi aag moon-munu

river much=ACC PROG reject-NEG

The river does not reject much [of anything].

⁵⁹⁵ ALIA MOSSALLAM 2012: 41-42.

⁵⁹⁶ From Muḥammad Hilla, Dakke; co-investigated with Zīzī Şiyām.

⁵⁹⁷ From Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ, Merwaw; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

ya is a variant of *aa/aag* used in some Mattokki villages, especially in Umbarakaab.

⇒ There is never enough of wisdom and good things.

If a father gives a good deal of advice to his son and the son stops him, the father says the proverb. – If someone owns a lot, wants more and someone else tells him “Enough” the first person may quote the proverb.

M1.5 ⁵⁹⁸ *ΕCCL ΔΟΥΛ ΖΙΙΑΔΔΑΓ Α ΒΙΡΙΓΙ.*
essi duul ziyaadag aa birigi.
essi duul *ziyaada=gi* *aag* *birig-i*
 river additional=ACC PROG want-3SG
 The river wants more.

⇒ The one who already has a lot wants even more.

⇒ He works a lot.

M1.6 ⁵⁹⁹ *ΕCCL ΔΟΥΛ ΖΙΙΑΔΔΑΓΙ Α ΒΙΡΙΓΙ.*
essi duullo tuubsu.
essi duul=ro *tuub-s-u*
 river=LOC wade-PRT2-1PL
 We waded in the river.

⇒ Our father’s wealth allowed us to enjoy life.

M1.7 ⁶⁰⁰ *ΕCCL ΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΝΑΛΟΥ ΤΕΒΚΙ!*
essi duulgi nalu teebki!
essi duul=gi *nal-u* *teeb-ki*
 river=ACC see-IMP:SG stop-COND
 See the river, when it stops!

⁵⁹⁸ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Aḥmad Gumma’.

⁵⁹⁹ From ASMAA A. KENAWY, Elephantine Island.

⁶⁰⁰ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island.

⇒ It is worth going there.

If a girl does not want to go to a shop because she assumes it is closed, and her parents assume the opposite, they encourage her by saying the proverb.

M1.8 ⁶⁰¹ *ΕCCT ΔΟΥΛΛΟ ΤΩΝ CIBĒ Ā BELI.*

essi duullo toon sibeē aa beli.

essi duul=ro toon sibeē aag bel-i

river=LOC from mud PROG exit-3SG

Out of the river the mud comes.

sibeē

River and mud belong together, without the river there is no mud. Before the introduction of fertilizers, mud ensured the fertility of the soil, and thus the well-being of the inhabitants on the river banks. It was also used for house-building.

⇒ The son is like the father.

English: a chip off the old block

M1.9 ⁶⁰² *Ī COYBĀ ECCT ΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΑΚΚΙΡĒΝΑ?*

ii subaa essi duulgi akkireena?

ii subaa essi duul=gi akkiree-na

hand finger river=ACC empty-Q:NEUT

Does the finger of the hand empty the river?

⇒ You should work with others.

⇒ The crowd will overpower the very strong one who is alone.

M1.10 ⁶⁰³ *ΕΨΕΪ ΚΟΥΡCOCINΓΑΔ, ECCT ΟΓΓΟΓΙΡ ΑΨΑΡΟCCOΥΜ.*

eshey kursosingad, essi ongoogir asharossum.

⁶⁰¹ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke.

⁶⁰² From Yahya ‘Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, ‘Adel Fakharāny, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim.

⁶⁰³ From MASSENBAACH 1933: 146; co-investigated with Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ. G. von Massenbach may have received it from Samuel Ali Hissein. If *ng* belongs to one morpheme, literate Nubians write $\square\square$ in Nubian characters, not $\square\square$.

eshey kursus-os-in=gad ...

[village old-PFV-3SG]=CAUS

essi ongoo=gir ashar-os-s-um

water south=ALL flow-PFV-PRT2-3SG

When the land grew old, the water [turned direction and] flew southward.

ongoo In Lower Nubia the Nile flew northward except between Korosko and Derr, an area nowadays flooded by Lake Nasser/Nubia.

⇒ Everything is topsy-turvy.

So far, I have not met any native speaker from the northern Mattokki villages where the Nile follows its northward direction who knew the proverb. Armgard Goo-Grauer remembers a journey in the early 1960s prior to the *hijra* when she was travelling on a sailing boat between Derr and Korosko. The world appeared to be totally distorted because all at once the sun was rising and setting on the other bank due to the Nile bending its course. Prior to the *hijra* both Abuhoor and Merwaw where Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ with whom I discussed the proverb belongs to, were among the Mattokki villages closest to Korosko.⁶⁰⁴

To Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ the proverb has been fulfilled with the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Sometimes the water within Lake Nasser/Nubia flows southward meaning that everything has changed.

M1.11 ⁶⁰⁵ *ḲIMEΔ āĪN ECCIP COYKKAṖ NAWI ME? ḤŪYΔOCCOY.*

Himed aayn essir sukkar nawi me? juudossu.

⁶⁰⁴ In the area of Merowe in the Sudan the river Nile also changes direction. There, “the natives say that that area is abandoned by God, since it is difficult to orient toward Mecca during prayers.” (ENDERLIN 1918: 49) – In the German original: “Aus diesem Grunde sagen die Eingeborenen, jene Gegend sei von Gott verlassen, da es schwer sei, sich über die Richtung nach Mekka bei den Gebeten zu orientieren.”

⁶⁰⁵ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

Himed aay=na essi=ro sukkar nawi me
 <name> live=GEN water=LOC sugar SIM Q:NEG:FOC
juude-os-s-u
 dissolve-PFV-PRT2-3SG

Isn't he like the sugar [in a location] in the water [named]
 "Himed is alive"? It [completely] melted.

Himed aay is a place name meaning 'Himed is alive'. Himed was a boatman. He nearly drowned in a whirlpool near West Sehel, yet survived. That place was named accordingly.

⇒ The child has died. It was not as lucky as Himed.

⇒ They are very sad.

M1.12 ⁶⁰⁶ *ΚΙΔΔΙ ΒΟΪΛ ΕΣΣΙΓΕΔ ΡΟΥΨΕΚΙ.*

kiddi buul essiged rusheeki.

kiddi buu-il essi=ged rushee-ki
 drown STAT-PTC:IPF water=INS scatter.LV-COND

When you scatter with water the one who is drowning.

⇒ Your influence is negligible.

M1.13 ⁶⁰⁷ *ΕΣΣΙ ΨΟΥΓΟΥΡΚΙ, ΩΕΛΙ ΤΕΔΔΕΡ ᾶ ΤΟΥΒΙΡΑ.*

essi shugurki, weli tedder aa tuubira.

essi shugur-ki wel-i tedder ...
 water descend-COND dog-PL on.him

aag tuub-r-a
 PROG wade-NEUT-3PL

tedder could be interlinearised as *ter* (3SG) *-de =ro* (LOC). However, as glossing the second morpheme turned out to be a challenge, also for my co-investigators, I do not attempt such a thorough analysis.

⁶⁰⁶ From Muḥammad Ismā'īl, Dakke; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

⁶⁰⁷ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awad, Thābit Zāki, Khālid Karār.

When the water [river] descends, the dogs wade on/in it.

- ⇒ When a wealthy person becomes poor, even someone of low status can hurt him.
- ⇒ Something has become easy.
- ⇒ When there is no danger everyone can make himself a hero.

While the interpretation of the similar proverb A1.12 in this semantic domain indicates a shameful connotation (immoral woman, no integrity) this interpretation was absent when M1.13 was elicited.

M1.14 ⁶⁰⁸ *TŌYBAP EN ΓŌN, TŌYBOCPOY.*

tuubar en goon, tuubosru.

tuub-ar e-n goon tuub-os-r-u

wade-NR be-3SG SUB wade-PFV-NEUT-1/2PL

While it is the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season, you (PL) completely wade/wade indeed.

tuubar and *tuub* are a wordplay, also in the following proverbs.

- ⇒ Seize the opportunity!
- ⇒ Don’t wait any longer!

M1.15 ⁶⁰⁹ *ECCIN TŌYBAPPO TŌN KIDΔAPK Ā CARKI.*

essin tuubar toon kiddark aa sarki.

essi=na tuub-ar=ro toon ...

water=GEN wade-NR=LOC from

kiddi-ar=gi aag sarki-Ø

drown-NR=ACC PROG fear-3SG

From ‘wading’ in the [shallow] water he fears drowning.

- ⇒ He is overly cautious and risks nothing.

⁶⁰⁸ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. Thābit Zāki adds *bi* before *tuubosru*, placing the action into the future.

⁶⁰⁹ From St48; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki. The Mattokki students write *bicci* ‘to wake up’ instead of *sarki*. However, *bicci* is not supported by any of the research participants.

English: He is scared of his own shadow.

M1.16 ⁶¹⁰ Φᾶλαγιά τῶν βαρρο βῖνῃ.

faalagid tuubarro biinee.

faala-gid tuub-ar=ro biinee-Ø

good-NR wade-NR=LOC appear.LV-3SG

The good appears in the ‘wading’/tuubar season.

⇒ A good friend turns up in a difficult situation.

English: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

M1.17 ⁶¹¹ Κούρτι τῶν βαρρο βι βῖνῃ.

kurti tuubarro bi biinee.

kurti tuub-ar=ro bi biinee-Ø

knee wade-NR=LOC TAM appear.LV-3SG

The knee will appear in the ‘wading’/tuubar season.

kurti While the proverb does not state whether the knee belongs to a man or a woman, in the latter case a man should not see the woman’s knee as that is regarded as shameful to the woman.

⇒ Don’t judge something before you see it!

⇒ You are going where you should not go.

⇒ You are looking at something that you should not see.

This proverb is less drastic than the following one (M1.18) and its Andaandi equivalent A1.14.

⁶¹⁰ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with ‘Umar Ḥasan, ‘Abd al-Raziq ‘Abd al-Majīd.

⁶¹¹ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Dahab Ḥisayn.

M1.18 ⁶¹² *KŌYKKI TŌYB̄aPPO ā BĪNĒ.*

kuukki tuubarro aa biinee.

kuukki tuub-ar=ro aag biinee-Ø

<men's.disease> wade-NR=LOC PROG appear.LV-3SG

The men's skin disease appears in the 'wading'/*tuubar* season.

kuukki

is a male skin disease at the leg, as discussed before at A1.14. MASSENBACH (1962) did not collect the lexeme itself, She lists *kūkāi* 'hernia' (collected by Herman Almkvist), and *kūki* 'penis', (collected by Richard Lepsius), not offering her own version although she was closely associated with medical staff at the German hospital in Aswan. The discrepancies may be due to the fact that it is awkward to talk about diseases related to the sexual organs. Also, due to its choice of metaphor the proverb is only said when no woman is present.

⇒ The secret will become obvious.

⇒ If you praise yourself, others will examine you.

⇒ In the end one will see if a promise is kept.⁶¹³

variant *tuubarro kuukkici biineera.*

In the 'wading'/*tuubar* season the men's skin diseases appear.

English: The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

While one person considers something as possible, a second one contradicts. A third person intervening may say the proverb.

⁶¹² From Aḥmad Ūrabi, Umbaraak; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Muḥammad 'Abdallah; variant from Ajīb Jabāli. MASSENBACH (1933: 191 and 1962: 211) spells it '*kūki*'.

⁶¹³ In my experience Nubian grassroots scholars mainly keep their promises are kept in a way similar to Western Europe. In Andaandi that topic occurs multiple times (see A9.25, A20.5, A22.41, A27.1, A28.9), Mattokki only offers one further proverb related to keeping promises (M28.10).

M1.19 ⁶¹⁴ ΔΕΜΪΡΑΝ ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓΚΙΡΪΜΑ.

demiiran turugkiriima.

demüira=na turug=kirii-ma

Nile.flood=GEN wind=SIM-COP

He is similar to the [strong] wind of the Nile flood.

⇒ He is aggressive.

⇒ He changes his behaviour frequently.

M1.20 ⁶¹⁵ ΜΟΣ ΜΟΣΚ ἄ ΔᾠΥΡΝΑ ΒᾠΔΙΝ ΓΕΔΔΙΛΓΙ.

moj mojk aa duurna boodin geddilgi.

moj moj=gi aag duur-na ...

wave wave=ACC PROG reach-NEG

bood-in geddi-il=gi

run-3SG as.much.as-PTC:IPF=ACC

The wave does not reach the (other) wave, as much as it runs.

⇒ Someone with little knowledge will never reach someone with great knowledge even if he studies a lot.

⇒ A poor person will never become as rich as a wealthy person.

variant *boodin geddilgi mojk aa durna.*

As much as it runs it cannot reach the wave.

M1.21 ⁶¹⁶ ΤΙΓΓᾶΡΡΟ ΤἘΒΙΝ ΓᾠΝ, ΜΑΛΤΙΝΑ ΖΑΒΑΡΚΕΔ ἄ ΙCΚΙΓΙ.

tingaarro teebin goon, maltina habarked aa issigi.

⁶¹⁴ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim, Aḥmad ‘Ali. Thābit Zāki and his friends gathering in a teahouse added that they no longer use the proverb, and therefore only their parents, unfortunately now deceased, would be able to give the exact meaning. – ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim, his family and Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz replace =*kirii* by *galig*.

⁶¹⁵ From ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim, Dakke and Heesa Island; variant from Zīzī Ṣiyām.

⁶¹⁶ From St47; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. Zīzī Ṣiyām replaces the INS clitic =*ked* of *habarked* by the ACC clitic =*gi*. The same variation of INS and ACC clitic occurs in M9.31.

tingaar=ro teeb-in goon ...
 west=LOC stop-3SG SUB
malti=na habar=ged aag issig-i
 east=GEN news=INS PROG ask-3SG

Although he is at the west [bank], he asks for the news of the east [bank].

St. transl.: The west wants to know the news of the east.

⇒ He meddles in affairs that do not concern him.

⇒ He is noisy.

⇒ He knows nothing about the social life of the community and therefore asks in the wrong places.

The proverb does not exaggerate. Prior to the *hijra* at low tide one could shout or talk at the right angle from one bank to the other side and be understood.⁶¹⁷

M1.22 ⁶¹⁸ *ḡANḡELOKĒḡ Ā CĀRKILI, BOWWIGI KŌYRKŌMNA.*

hanjelokeeg aa saarkili, bowwigi kuurkoomnu.

hanjelokee=gi aag saarki-il-i ...

clay=ACC PROG fear-PTC:IPF-PL

bowwi=gi kuur-koo-mun-a

swim=ACC learn-PRT1-NEG-3PL

They who fear the clay, they do not learn to swim.

hanjelokee is the clay next to the river. While shortly after the Nile flood it is not safe to walk on it, as one can slip easily, the work of a Nubian farmer requires it.

⇒ Take a small risk and overcome your fear!

When a father wants to send out his son after sunset and his son due to fear of darkness is unwilling, his father may reply quoting the proverb.

⁶¹⁷ A. Goo-Grauer and Sha‘bān Berber 2014, p.c.

⁶¹⁸ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Asmaa A. Kenawy.

4.2. Waterwheel

In Nubia it rarely rains. Except for a few seasonal water courses (*jer*), there are no brooks or streams flowing down the hills surrounding the Nile valley that might water the fields. While in some parts of Egypt the water of the Nile can be diverted to fields lying close to the river Nile, in most of Nubia irrigation by inundation is rarely possible due to the height difference between the river and the fields. The few wells (*mitar*) do not provide sufficient water.⁶¹⁹

Therefore, in Nubia two kinds of agricultural cultivation are known:

- Flooding the fields during the Nile flood without mechanical means of irrigation, then sowing and tilling (*teerar*). Such a method makes the best use of the fertile Nile mud but is unsuccessful in years with a low flood.
- Basin irrigation (*deeg*; Mattokki also *iiv*) where the water is raised and channelled to an individual plot.

In Nubia the second kind of cultivation was mainly performed with the support of the waterwheel (*kole/kolee*; Ar. *sâqîa*), a mechanism for drawing water using a windlass to a higher level. The other method was a hand-driven mechanism for elevating water buckets (*kiye*, Mattokki only; Ar. *shādūf*).

Around the 1st century AD the waterwheel was introduced to Nubia. It was a technical feat, increasing the available agricultural land, and feeding a larger population.⁶²⁰ A source from the early 19th century describes its significance:

Irrigation in Nubia ... is carried on entirely by means of the ... waterwheels ... Craftsmen who were able to build and repair a waterwheel were highly regarded.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Before the *hijra* in the Fadijja region and on some of the islands there were a few fields nearly on the same height as the river. (A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.) – JUNKER and SCHÄFER (1932: 25) list the *neja* ‘Mitar duul’ (lit.: ‘big well’) in the *omadeya* Umbarakaab.

⁶²⁰ For Mattokki, the technical side of the waterwheel is described in JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921: 139-183, for Andaandi in MASSENBAACH 1962: 119-122. All three authors received input from Samuel Ali Hissein.

⁶²¹ BURCKHARDT 1819: 140.

Nubians involved in agriculture worked the waterwheel cooperatively. Besides the hardware it needed

the draft animals that propelled it, the drover who kept them moving, the overseer of production, the laborers who tended the crop or brought fossil alluvium from the desert as fertilizer, the craftsmen who made and repaired the waterwheel pots and ropes, and a variety of ancillary services.⁶²²

The draft animals, consisting of two oxen or two cows,⁶²³ trotted round in a continuous circle pushing the yoke. As they needed rest between shifts one waterwheel required “the alternate labour of eight or ten cows”.⁶²⁴ In the unlikely event of the work being taken over by humans five to six farmers were needed. As long as the animal stayed on its circular path in front of the waterwheel drover, who sat on a special seat, there was no danger. Only when the wooden beams covering the water flowing to the bottom part of the waterwheel broke or the animal left its path could it fall right into the river.

Waterwheel attendants operated four shifts, two during the day and two during the night, six days a week, with each shift having a different name. On Fridays shifts were changed. Work began with the waterwheel attendant turning up to his shift on time. Highest care and diligence was required as neglect might result in extensive damage for the whole community. When a waterwheel came to a halt through carelessness or even through an attendant not turning up at his shift there was no irrigation, and hence no income and

⁶²² SPAULDING 1985: 86.

⁶²³ Alternatively it could be a cow and an ox; if two cows, the older one would work on the inner side; if a cow and an ox, the cow would work on the inner side. Generally the stronger one worked outside. Sometimes one strong ox was sufficient. This was referred to as *argo* (El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2011, p.c.). In Leheb one cow and one ox would draw the waterwheel, as two oxen might quarrel. (Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.)

In the Nubian Museum in Aswan [last visited in 2022] in one display a donkey is shown drawing the waterwheel mechanism. A photo of this display can be seen in NICHOLAS 2017: 117. However, a donkey was not strong enough to perform this task.

⁶²⁴ BURCKHARDT 1819: 137.

no food. The one responsible for the accident lost the support of the village community.⁶²⁵

Craftsmen built the waterwheel without nails. At least in Debood it was customary to replace ropes and jugs on the Day of Ashura.⁶²⁶

The construction of the wooden cogwheel (*argade*) was particularly difficult. Its secret was well-kept by the waterwheel engineers (*basiir*).⁶²⁷ Its wood was from the *sant* acacia tree. The wooden cogs of both the large wheel (*argaden duul*; lit.: ‘big cogwheel’) and small wheel (*argaden tood*; lit.: ‘small cogwheel’) were coated with a mixture of oil and soot, to enable them to grip well in a right angle. One place on both wheels had a larger than usual gap between the cogs. It served to offset any tendency for the mechanism to shift slightly and jam up. If both wheels were not in tune, they would destroy each other. The beams were lashed together with fresh leather straps.⁶²⁸

The waterwheel jar (*beeshe/beeshee*) went far down to the river, or to the channel⁶²⁹ leading the water from the river to the bottom of the waterwheel in order to draw the water. If the river was low and the mechanism wasn’t reaching as far as the water level, the waterwheel worked in vain. Therefore, the difference in altitude needed adaptation between the rising and falling water levels. Some farmers even put two waterwheels in a chain. A small one that got the water up to the first level, only used during low tide, then a second one that got the water up to field level.⁶³⁰ There it was channelled into an ingenious water distribution system through a trough next to the waterwheel.

⁶²⁵ HĀMID KHABĪR 2007 and ABDUL HAMID EL ZEIN 2010: 129. Although the information of the latter is taken from the Fadijja area, it applies also to the Mattokki.

⁶²⁶ A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.; ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2020, p.c.

⁶²⁷ *basiir* denotes ‘somebody having insight/knowledge’. It is derived from SCA *baṣar* ‘eyesight’. See also semantic domain 30 ‘Life, Calamities and Death’.

⁶²⁸ al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl 2009, p.c.; al-Amīn Muḥammad 2015, p.c.

⁶²⁹ Such a channel from the river to the bottom of the waterwheel could be 50 to 60 m long, depending on the annual cycle of low water and flood. (Faḍl al-Mūla 2017, p.c.)

⁶³⁰ Men from Urbi 2007, p.c.

The Andaandi term *kole* and the Mattokki term *kolee* do not only denote the waterwheel itself “but also the plot of land which it [i.e. one waterwheel] is used to irrigate”.⁶³¹ The waterwheel and the land belonging to it were one of the pillars in the life of a Nubian, the other being the house and the mosque.⁶³² One Nubian village may have had fifty or more waterwheels. Some Mattokki hamlets were named after the waterwheel’s owner plus the lexeme *kolee*.⁶³³

Ownership was a complex matter: “... every share owner of the land must help build the waterwheel and also donate one of its parts.”⁶³⁴ And: “Each part [of the waterwheel] was owned separately by individuals who in turn shared the production of the land.”⁶³⁵ This determined the value of a man’s property.⁶³⁶ Due to mutual obligations and ownerships the waterwheel “encourage[d] and strengthen[ed] cooperative relationships ... [and] contribute[ed] to social unity in this district.”⁶³⁷

Due to the Nile water treaties between the Sudan and Egypt consumption of water has been limited with each waterwheel requiring a license, in the Dongola Reach not easily obtained.⁶³⁸

⁶³¹ NICHOLLS 1918: 21. He deals with the waterwheel in the Dongola Reach. Slight differences in the text are explained by a) Nicholls writing while the waterwheel was still in operation, whereas I received the information through personal communication with Nubians who had worked the waterwheel in the past; b) myself looking simultaneously at both the Dongola Reach and Lower Nubia; c) myself focusing on waterwheel operations described in the proverbs.

⁶³² Aḥmad Hamza 2017+2020, p.c. This statement has to be limited to Nubian hamlets with a mosque, as many hamlets were without one. There the rest house may have been more important. (A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.)

⁶³³ Faḍl al-Mūla 2017, p.c. – E.g. the *neja* ‘Orbaab kolee’ in the *omadeya* Kalaabshe (JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1932: 29).

⁶³⁴ ABDUL HAMID EL ZEIN 2010: 129.

⁶³⁵ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 206.

⁶³⁶ BURCKHARDT 1819: 66.

⁶³⁷ ABDUL HAMID EL ZEIN 2010: 127.

⁶³⁸ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

While the waterwheel was an engineering feat that until the mid-20th century provided the most efficient means for irrigation in Nubia, there were severe limitations to its efficiency, restricting its yields in the Mattokki region:

When four to five equal partners are involved, the maximum amount of irrigated land that each can expect is one feddan which falls to half a feddan or less during the ... low river seasons. Of this acreage up to 50 percent should be planted with fodder to maintain the *saqiya* [water-wheel] cattle ... Even after the palms begin to yield, much of the capital gained through cash sales will eventually be necessary for *saqiya* maintenance and repairs.⁶³⁹

To an outsider who came to Nubia, the creaking, squawking sound of the wooden wheels at a constant rhythm, and the drover singing alongside special songs to liven up the monotonous work, sounded like a concert.⁶⁴⁰

In the second half of the 20th century the waterwheel vanished, being replaced by the diesel pump (Ar. loanword *bābūr*),⁶⁴¹ allowing the irrigation of suitable plots higher up and needing less human effort. On Lebeb Island a couple of miles south of Dongola, the last waterwheel was taken out of service around 1970; in Khannaag village in 1976; and in Agade north of Dongola on the other side of the river in 1978.⁶⁴² In Lower Nubia all

⁶³⁹ SCUDDER 2010: 158.

⁶⁴⁰ A. Goo-Grauer p.c. 2018; Herman Bell 2019, p.c. Both travelled through Lower Nubia shortly prior to the *hijra*.

A contemporary presentation of the waterwheel by Fadijja Nubians can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKIZFMHcSiE [videoed in 2022; last accessed on 5 August 2022]. One of the presenters, Muḥi al-Dīn Ṣalāh, encouraged Nubians to study their own heritage. While the talk is in Arabic, technical terms (e.g. *argadee*) are in Nubian. I thank Maher Habbob for pointing out this video.

⁶⁴¹ GOO-GRAUER forthcoming. – TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 22: “pump, irrigation pump, engine”. The pre-*hijra* Mattokki named *bābūr* everything that somehow worked mechanically, the *bosta*, a transistor radio, or a stove. (A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.)

⁶⁴² For Lebeb: al-Amīn Muḥammad 2015, p.c. For Khannaag: The waterwheel belonged to El-Shafie El-Guzuuli’s grandfather. For Agade: ‘Abdullahi Samiltood 2016, p.c.

waterwheels vanished at the *hijra*. One observer summarised the demise of the waterwheel:

It was discovered that the irrigation systems, of which thousands had existed in the Nile Valley only a few decades ago, had now completely disappeared and been replaced by diesel pumps. I myself could only see one *sāqīa* on Djarada Island near Dongola in operation.⁶⁴³

Parts of a waterwheel are kept in Urbi and were shown at the exhibition mentioned in subchapter 3.6. With the waterwheel falling into disuse, the terms and the functions of each part of the waterwheel and the well-organised work at the waterwheel are only remembered by the older folk. Only one lexeme shows similarity with Coptic, none with Arabic. Some of the specific terms “cannot be found in the Arabic dictionary.”⁶⁴⁴ In Lebeb the last engineer (*basiir*) who knew how to construct a waterwheel died in the early 2000s.⁶⁴⁵

The loss of the waterwheel in agriculture is regarded as one cause for language shift. One of the organisers of a monthly Nubian cultural meeting

⁶⁴³ BRAUKÄMPER 1990: 237; in the German original: “Es stellte sich heraus, daß diese Bewässerungsanlagen, von denen bis vor wenigen Jahrzehnten noch tausende im Niltal existierten, inzwischen völlig verschwunden und durch Dieselpumpen ersetzt worden sind. Ich selbst konnte nur noch eine *sāqīa* auf der Insel Djarada bei Dongola in Betrieb sehen.” – There is no Djarada Island near Dongola. As there is a village named Jeraada next to Magaasir Island and some of Jeraada’s inhabitants origin from Magaasir Island, I assume that Braukämper refers to Magaasir Island.

⁶⁴⁴ NICHOLSON 1935: 314. That is confirmed by contemporary Nubians.

Neither NICHOLSON 1935 nor ABDUL HAMID EL ZEIN (2010: 127-129) are overly helpful, since neither of them properly mark whether terms are Nubian or Arabic. Although NICHOLSON speaks of “*Saqia Terminology in Dongola*”, he collected his language data in the Merowe District where the Arab speaking Shaygiya live. Also, ABDUL HAMID EL ZEIN denotes the waterwheel by its Arabic term *saqiya* (Andaandi/Mattokki *kole(e)*, Nobiin *eskalee*), for the specific parts he seems to use Nubian terms. Still, no better information on waterwheel terminology is available.

ARMBUSTER (1965: 144) relates *mois* (“track round which cattle working waterwheel walk counter-clockwise”) to Coptic **MOËIT** (way).

⁶⁴⁵ al-Amīn Muḥammad 2015, p.c. – Written sources are for Mattokki JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1921: 139-183; for Andaandi MASSENBACH 1962: 119-122. Also, some Nubians are writing up terms individually.

in Cairo named *indo mando* attended by Egyptian Nubians pointed out that until a few decades ago when two farmers worked together, Nubian expressions sufficed to discuss the work, including terms from the domain of the waterwheel. These days, technical expressions that define the parts of the diesel pump and many agricultural terms, such as *faddān*, are in Arabic.⁶⁴⁶

A2.1 ⁶⁴⁷ *TENN MAČKANE KOLENCIGI KOYCIN.*

tenn maskane kolencigi kusin.

tenn maskane kole-nci=gi kus-in

3SG:POSSbeauty waterwheel-PL=ACC stop-3SG

Her beauty stops the waterwheels.

maskane In Nubian poetry ‘beauty’ is related to being close to the river. It is the place most likely to be green, therefore the most beautiful part of the whole village, and the place where the waterwheels are located.⁶⁴⁸ – If someone is described as *maskane suud*, that person excels only in exterior beauty.

⇒ She is very beautiful. Due to her beauty she would distract a waterwheel attendant and thereby stop work and income.

English: She is drop-dead gorgeous. – She could crack a mirror.

Stopping a waterwheel may relate to the *ogres*, evil spirits who preferred quietness and were said to be a reason for waterwheels not functioning.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁶ Muḥi al-Dīn Ṣalāh 2009, p.c. *faddān* is an Egyptian square measure, about 0.42 hectares.

⁶⁴⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 16); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Maḥmūd Sāti, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf. the two Andaandi poems transcribed in IBRĀHĪM ḤĀMID ‘ABDEL KARĪM and BELL 1990.

⁶⁴⁹ Taken from the eighth episode of the NubaTube series ‘Our Religion and Stories’: www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9Qu2q9zksY [last accessed on 5 November 2018]. For *ogres*, see also semantic domain 27 ‘Materials’.

- A2.2** ⁶⁵⁰ *TOKKON ἀΡΓΑΔΕΝ ΚΙΒΡ̄Ο̄CΝαζαλ ΚαΒαρΜΕΝ!*
tokkon argaden kibroosnahad kabarmen!
*tokkon **argade**=n kibr-oos=nahad ...*
 IMP:NEG cogwheel=GEN be.troubled-NR=SIM
kabar-men
 stagger-IMP:NEG
 Just do not stagger like the wobbling of the cogwheel!
 ⇒ Work thoroughly!
 ⇒ He changes his behavior frequently.

- A2.3** ⁶⁵¹ *ζαωω̄αλ ἀΡΓΑΔΕΓΙ ΚᾹῙCΙΝΔΟ, ἀΡΑΒ Δ̄Ε̄Ν̄ΑΒΚΙ*
ΓΟΨCΙΝΔΟ.
hawwaad argadegi kaaysindo, arab deenaabki gony-sindo.
*hawwaad **argade**=gi kaay-s-in=ro ...*
 [fisherman cogwheel=ACC forge-PRT2-3SG]=LOC/TMP
arab deenaab=gi gony-s-in=ro
 [Arab lounge=ACC build-PRT2-3SG]=LOC/TMP
 At the time the fisherman forged the cogwheel, at the time the
 Arab built the lounge.
hawwaad – arab As fishermen do not make a cogwheel, nomadic Arabs,
 like the Kababish camel herders in Northern Sudan, do not build
 a lounge.
kaay denotes in particular the work of manufacturing any part of a
 waterwheel.
 ⇒ Everything is getting upside down. The rich are getting poor and
 the poor are getting rich.

⁶⁵⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 168); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

⁶⁵¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 227); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

A2.4 ⁶⁵² *ΙΣΛΑΜΓΙ ΤΟΛΛΕΔ ΔΔ̄Ν.*

islamgi tolled daan.

islam=gi toller-ed daa-n

yoke=ACC draw-PFV be.present-3SG

He continually draws the [waterwheel] yoke.

-ed daa Further information is found in ARMBRUSTER 1960: §3987.

⇒ He carries the burden of his responsibilities.

⇒ He is responsible for all his works.

The proverb answers the question: ‘How is he doing?’

A2.5 ⁶⁵³ *ΔΟΛΛΙ ΜΕΝΙΛΛΟ, ΒΕ̄ΨΕ ΚΑΣΜΟΥΝ.*

dolli menillo, beeshe kasmun.

dolli menil=ro beeshe kas-mun

deep except=LOC waterwheel.jar draw.water-NEG

Except where it [reaches] deep, the waterwheel jar does not draw water.

⇒ If you are looking for profit look where there is plenty.

A2.6 ⁶⁵⁴ *ΦΟΓΙΡΝ ΤῙ ΚΟ̄ΜΕΓΕΔ ΨΟΥΓΟΥΡΙΝ.*

fogirn tii koomeged shugurin.

fogir=n tii koome=ged shugur-in

poor=GEN cow beam=INS get.off-3SG

The cow of the poor falls at the [waterwheel] beam.

⇒ He is unlucky.

⁶⁵² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 8); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Fu’ād ‘Akūd.

⁶⁵³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 99 and 2016: proverb 98); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

⁶⁵⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 112; and 2016: proverb 110); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. The proverb has the same meaning as A19.3.

A2.7 ⁶⁵⁵ *ΔΙΖΑ ΤΟΥΚΟΥΜΙΡ ΔᾶΝ, ΚΟΛΕ ΚΑΡΔΙΚΟΜΟΥΝΟΥΝ.*
jiha tukumir daan, kole karjikomunun.
jiha tukum=ir daa-n ...
 <name> waterwheel.seat=LOC be.present-3SG
kole *karji-ko-munun*
 irrigated.land ripen-PRT1-NEG
 Jiha was present on the waterwheel seat, [the plants on] the irrigated land did not ripen.

⇒ Someone who has been sent to fetch something takes so long that at his return the object is no longer needed.

⇒ He is not to be taken seriously.

A2.8 ⁶⁵⁶ *ΓΟΥΡ ΜῶΝΙΝΓΑΔ, ΤΙΓΙ ΔΟΥΚΚΕΔ ἄΓΙΡΙ.*
gur mooningad, tiigi dukked aagiri.

gur *moon-in=gad ...*
 [bull reject-3SG]=CAUS
tii=gi *dukki-ed aag-r-i*
 cow=ACC start-PFV PROG-NEUT-1SG

As the ox refused [to work on the waterwheel], I have prepared the cow.

gur – tii Usually an ox does the hard work, as at the waterwheel. Only when an ox is not available does a cow take over.

-ed aag When *-ed* indicates a completed action whose result is still perceivable, I usually translate it by the English present perfect.

⇒ A woman is forced to do the hard work that her husband refuses to do.

⁶⁵⁵ From female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān, Imaani; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

⁶⁵⁶ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Nemat Abdalrahman.

A2.9 ⁶⁵⁷ ΓΟΥΡΤΟΔΝ ΕΣΣΙ ΒΑΓΙ ΔΑΦΦΙΜΟΥΝ.*gurtoodn essi baagi jangimun.***gur**-tood=*n* *essi* *baa*=*gi* *jangi*-*mun*
bull-QUAL=GEN water field=ACC fill-NEG

The water of the calf [working the waterwheel] does not fill the [agricultural] field.

gurtood

A calf works slower and draws less water than an ox.

⇒

He is too young.

⇒

The job/responsibility is intended for an adult. However, it is carried out by someone who is not yet able to do so (as a child).

A2.10 ⁶⁵⁸ ΔΕΡΡΙΝ ΤΟΔ*jerrin tood***jerr**i=*n* *tood*
cow.at.waterwheel=GEN son

the son of the cow drawing the waterwheel

⇒

He gained his experience from his parents.

⇒

If his father and his mother are good [medical] doctors, he also will become one.

A2.11 ⁶⁵⁹ ΜΙΝΕ, ΕΡΩΔΤΤΙ ΚΟΥΡΟΥΒΒΕΓΙ ΑΡΚΙΝΔΟ, ΚΟΓΡΑΔΕ
ΚΑΝΝΕΚΙΡ ΩΕΔΙΝΔΟ, ΕΔΙΡΑΝ?*mine, erwatti kuruccegi arkindo, kograade kanneekir wedindo,
ediran?*

⁶⁵⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza. Also in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision.

⁶⁵⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 169); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza.

⁶⁵⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 225); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Ḥamed, Kamal Hussein, Mālik Aḥmad.

mine erwatti kurucce=gi arki-n=ro ...
 Q [drover whip=ACC let.fall-3SG]=LOC/TMP
kograade kannee=gir wed-in=ro ...
 [driftwood north=ALL float-3SG]=LOC/TMP
ed-r-an
 marry-NEUT-3PL

At the time the drover whips [lets fall the whip], at the time the driftwood floats toward the north, how do they marry?

erwatti While the plants are growing the waterwheel drover has to work hard. Only after selling the harvest does he get his share and can marry.

kograade is driftwood that during the annual Nile flood (when the farmer is especially busy) flows to the north.

⇒ Choose the right time for everything, also for your wedding and for harvesting. A wedding during the time of the flood, when most the agricultural work is to be done, is not suitable.

A2.12 ⁶⁶⁰ *TATTI KIKKEKIN, BOCOP ΔĀMOYN.*

tatti kikkekin, bosor daamun.

tatti *kikke-ki-n* *bosor* *daa-mun*
 shift complete-COND-3SG intelligence be.present-NEG

When the shift [at the waterwheel] is complete, there is no intelligence.

tatti Literally it is the “watch of duty of about six hours in farming / cultivating an irrigable land plot”.⁶⁶¹

⇒ There will come a time when no one will be able to do any good or bad deed anymore.

⁶⁶⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 101); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein.

⁶⁶¹ TAHA A. TAHA 2012: 9. It is also discussed in SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 52. In SCA *tatti* becomes *tattig*. The additional *g* is a typical feature of SCA words of Nubian origin.

The proverb compares a waterwheel shift with the day of judgement. Neither can be avoided. Everyone must take their turn, even during the night shift that some Nubians were reluctant to take on for fear of “devilish creatures”.⁶⁶² In the same way the faithful await the day of judgement and prepare for it.

A2.13 ⁶⁶³ *IN ar dā bō̄yroy ta, ē̄ngon oppin, tīgon
 doypripānoyn, taTTigon andin e wēcan tannan.*
*in ar daa buuru ta, eengon orrin, tiigon jurriranun, tattigon
 andin e weesan tannan.*

in ar daa buu-r-u ta een=gon ...
 DEM 1PL be.present STAT-NEUT-1PLDEM woman=CO
orri-n tii=gon jurri-ran-un ...
 have.labour.pains-3SG cow=CO milk-INF-COP
tatti=gon andi-n e wee-s-an tannan
 shift=CO 1SG:POSS-COP be say-PRT2-3PL COP

Our situation is like this: [my] wife is having labour pains, and the cow has to be milked, and they said that it is my turn at the shift [at the waterwheel].

in ... ta ... tannan ‘what we have come to is this’. *in ta* is like a demonstrative pointing to something not fixed. – *taran/teran* are variants of *tannan*. It can occur after a noun: *man em-bab taran/teran* (‘that is your father’) or after an inflected verb (as in our case).⁶⁶⁴ When the inflected verb is in the preterit it is PRT2.

tii A cow does not only provide milk, it is also employed for drawing the waterwheel. Usually a Nubian farmer owns only one or two.

-ran-un An uninflected verb plus INF suffix plus inflected copula expresses deontic necessity.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶² Cf. HUSSEIN FAHIM 1983: 75.

⁶⁶³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 129); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein, Thourya Muḥammad.

⁶⁶⁴ Taha A. Taha 2011, p.c.

⁶⁶⁵ KAMAL HUSSEIN and JAEGER 2022: 103.

⇒ A farmer needs to attend to many tasks simultaneously which easily causes trouble.

M2.1 ⁶⁶⁶ *ΚΟΛἘ ΝΑΩΙΚΚΕ ΔᾶΔἼ.*
kolee nawikke daajii.
kolee nawikke daajii-Ø
 waterwheel SIM roam-3SG
 He spins like the waterwheel.

⇒ He is always in motion.

⇒ He does not take rest.

English: He is always on the go.

M2.2 ⁶⁶⁷ *ΒἘΩἘ ΟΥΡΒΙΡ ΕCЦИΓ ᾶ ΙΝΔΙΜΝΟΥ.*
beeshee urbir essig aa injimnu.
beeshee urbir essi=gi aag inji-munu
 waterwheel.jar hole water=ACC PROG carry-NEG
 The waterwheel jar [with] a hole does not carry the water.

⇒ He does not accept advice.

M2.3 ⁶⁶⁸ *ΒἘΩἘΡ ΕCЦИ Δᾶ, ΒἘΩἘΡ ΕCЦИ ΔᾶΜΝΟΥ.*
beesheer essi daa, beesheer essi daamnu.
beeshee=ro essi daa ... daa-munu
 waterwheel.jar=LOC water be.present ... be.present-NEG
 There is water in the waterwheel jar; there is no water in the waterwheel jar.

⁶⁶⁶ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli and Ḥajja ‘Atiāt Šābr. The latter one being from Debood replaces *nawikke* by *nawitte*.

⁶⁶⁷ From St33; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

⁶⁶⁸ From Siyām Wannīs, Tingaar; written down by A. Goo-Grauer.

beeshee While spinning the waterwheel jar constantly fills with water from the river and empties it into the trough and from there into the channel leading to the field.

⇒ Sometimes life is good, sometimes life is bad.

M2.4 ⁶⁶⁹ ΟΓΙΣΚΑ ΩĒΡΙ, ΒĒΩĒΝΑ ΓΕΛΒΑ ΓΑΛΙΓΜΑ.

ogijka weeri, beesheena gelba galigma.

ogij=gi wee-r-i ...

man=ACC say-NEUT-1SG

beeshee=na gelba galig-ma

waterwheel.jar=GEN back resemble-COP

I told the man: It resembles the bottom of the waterwheel jar.

beesheena gelba A waterwheel jar and its bottom constantly spins.

⇒ One day is good, one day is bad.

4.3. Water from Waterwheel to Field

The following proverbs use the metaphor of channelling the water from the waterwheel along a sophisticated system of troughs (*sablo*), irrigation channels (*malti, jabi, jerantare*), small tubes, and finally breaches (*koroki*) to an individual irrigated agricultural plot (or basin, *baa*) with narrow mud rims to contain the water. Holding back the water in an irrigation canal outside of the appointed time by means of rocks, stones or mud walls means more water to irrigate one's own fields; however, other farmers further down the canal suffer. The whole distribution and irrigation system is so cleverly designed that anybody planning to do development work in Nubia should first get inspired by these procedures.

⁶⁶⁹ From 'Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi. 'Alā al-Dīn's grandmother said this proverb frequently.

A3.1 ⁶⁷⁰ *ḠABΛOP OYNDOPY, Baφφι!*
sablor undur, banynyi!
sablo=r undur-Ø banynyi-Ø
 trough=LOC let.in-IMP:SG speak-IMP:SG
 Let [water] in through the trough [and not round the side, and]
 speak!

⇒ Speak clearly/directly!

English: cut to the chase

English with opposite meaning: to beat about the bush

A3.2 ⁶⁷¹ *IN TA, ḠABΛOΓI ΔΟΥΚΚΙ ΔΕΡΑΝΤΑΡΕΓΕΔ ΚΟΒΙΡΑΝ
 ΤΑΝΝΑΝ.*

in ta, sablogi dukki jerantareged kobiran tannan.

in ta sablo=gi dukki ...

DEM trough=ACC start

jerantare=ged kob-r-an tannan

channel.after.trough=INS lock-NEUT-3PL COP

What we have come to is this: You open the trough, [yet] they
 lock the channel after the trough.

jerantare is a small wooden bent channel located behind the trough that
 leads the water in the direction of the main channel.

⇒ What you do has no value.

⇒ Don't repair something by destroying something else.

⁶⁷⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 14); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. Hāmīd Khabīr writes the final verb with one *ny* only.

⁶⁷¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 148); co-investigated with 'Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza.

- A3.3** ⁶⁷² *ΜΑΛΤΙ ΔΟΛΙΝ, Βᾶ ΝΙΜΟΥΝ.*
malti dolin, baa niimun.
malti dol-in baa nii-mun
 channel want-3SG plot drink-NEG
 The channel wants [water], [otherwise] the [agricultural] plot does not drink.
- ⇒ Without preparation and efforts no results are achieved.
 ⇒ Everything has its order.
 ⇒ Set your priorities.
 ⇒ He is entitled to receive his share first.
- variant *malti jokkin, baa niimunu.*
 The channel chews the water, the field does not drink.
- A3.4** ⁶⁷³ *ΜΑΛΤΙ ΒᾶΓΟΝΟΝ ΝΙΝ.*
malti baagonon niin.
malti baa=gonon nii-n
 channel plot=COM drink-3SG
 The channel drinks with the [irrigated] plot.
- ⇒ The position one is in determines everything else.
 ⇒ Marry a relative!
- variant *malti niimene, baa niimun.*
 As the channel does not drink, the plot does not drink.
- variant *malti jangimenkin, baa niimun.*
 If the channel does not fill up, the plot does not drink.

⁶⁷² From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 34); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Amna Muṣṭafa. The variant is ‘ABD AL-‘AAL AḤMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography.

⁶⁷³ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 50); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan; variants from Akram Ḥasan and ‘Abd al-Hādi Mekki.

variant *baa maltiged niin.*
 The field drinks with the channel.



Figure 3: Agricultural plots (*baa*) on Merowaarti Island

A3.5 ⁶⁷⁴ ΜΑΛΤΙ ΣΩΩΕΔ ΕΝ, ΒΑΓΙ ΔΟΡΡΑΝΜΟΥΝ.

malti sowed en, *baagi* jorranmun.

malti sowwi-ed e-n ...

channel get.dry-PFV be-3SG

baa=gi *joor-r-an-mun*

field=ACC harvest-NEUT-3PL-NEG

The channel has dried up, they do not harvest the [agricultural] plot.

⇒ The child cannot benefit before the father.

⁶⁷⁴ From Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Aartigaasha; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza; variant from Muṣṭafa Hājirtöd.

variant *malti sowwed en, baa niimun.*
The channel is dried up, the plot does not drink.

A3.6 ⁶⁷⁵ *ΕCCE ΓΟΓΛΑΤΤΙ ΜΙΓΓΙ ΕΚΚΙ ΤΙΚΚΟΝ? ΜΑΛΤΙΝ ΤΑΚΚΕ̄
CΙΚΚΙ!*

essi goglatti mingi ekki tikkon? maltin takkee sikki!

essi goglatti mingi er=gi tir-ko-n ...
water frog Q:ACC 2SG=ACC give-PRT1-3SG

malti=n takki-ee sikki-Ø
channel=GEN plant-NR ask-IMP:SG

Frog, what did the water give to you? – [The frog answers:]
Ask the plantation [near the channel]!

goglatti A frog cannot live without water. Hence, the first sentence is a rhetorical question. When hearing the frogs croaking, the villagers along the Seleem channel in the Dongola Reach knew that the Nile flood had arrived.

takkee is the agricultural land near the channel, but not the basin itself. It symbolises a place where people are joyful.

⇒ If he gets too much it will not be a problem to him.

A3.7 ⁶⁷⁶ *Βαζῖτ̄ Εωιπιν Κοροκιρ.*

bahiit ewirin korokir.

bahiit ewir-in koroki=r

<name> plant-3SG breach.in.water.channel=LOC

[Farmer] Bakhiiit plants in the breach of the water channel.

bahiit is the Nubianised version of the Arabic name *Bakhīt* that means ‘bringing good luck’. The name expresses the opposite of the result of *bahiit*’s work. Here it is a kind of word play.

⁶⁷⁵ From female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān, Imaani; co-investigated with Rufā‘i ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, Hāmid Khabīr, Hishām Bashīr, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

⁶⁷⁶ From ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Merowaarti East.

koroki is a breach dug in the water channel to allow water to flow into the field.

⇒ His work has no benefit.

A3.8⁶⁷⁷ *ΕCCT ΔΑΛΙΡ ΒΕΛΜΟΥΝ.*

essi aalir belmun.

essi aali=r bel-mun

water high=LOC exit-NEG

The water does not come out at the high [place].

⇒ The lowly one cannot speak with a high one.

M3.1⁶⁷⁸ *ΕCCT ΔΑΒΙΡ ΤΑΪΝ ΒΟΪΛΓ ἄ ΤΕΒΚΙΔΔΙ.*

essi jabir tayn buulg aa teebkiddi.

essi jabi=ro tayn buu-il=gi...

water [channel=LOC flow STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC

aag teeb-kiddi

PROG stop-CAUS

He causes the water flowing continually in the channel to stop.

⇒ Don't have any dealings with him, he causes misfortune.

⇒ He has the 'evil eye'.

M3.2⁶⁷⁹ *ΕCCT ΔΑΒΙΓ ἄ ΤΑΛΛΕΚΙ, ΔΟΓΟΓΙΡ ἄ ΚΟΥΔΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

essi jabig aa talleki, dogogir aa kujmunu.

essi jabi=gi aag talle-ki ...

water channel=ACC PROG walk-COND

⁶⁷⁷ From 'Abdullahi Naṣr al-Dīn, Hamu; co-investigated with Fu'ād 'Akūd.

⁶⁷⁸ From Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke. The 'evil eye' will be discussed in more detail in semantic domain 19 'Body Parts'.

⁶⁷⁹ From Hanā Ṣalāh, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Uthmān, Sha'bān Berber, Dunya 'Abd al-Fataḥ, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ; variant from 'Adīla Sulaymān.

dogoo=gir aag kuj-munu
 up=ALL PROG be.up-NEG

When the water flows along the channel, it does not flow upwards.

- ⇒ You pretend to be more than you are.
 ⇒ You do not have much money, yet you want to spend it lavishly.
 ⇒ You want to achieve something great. Don't do it at once but step by step.

Dunya 'Abd al-Fataḥ's grandmother used the proverb when she compared old and modern times. When she was young, water had to be carried up from the Nile, as water does not flow upwards. Nowadays, there are water taps in each house that seemingly make the water flow upwards from the river to the house.

variant *essi duul aaligir aa kujminu.*
 The river does not flow high/upwards.

M3.3 ⁶⁸⁰ *ΕCCI Cα2αλΓ ā KāωI.*
essi sahalg aa kaashi.
essi sahal=gi aag kaashe-i
 water easy=ACC PROG search-3SG

The water searches the easy [way, i.e. downward].

- ⇒ He chooses the easy solution to accomplish something.
 ⇒ Things take their course.

M3.4 ⁶⁸¹ *ΕCCI ΒāΡΟ ā ΔΟΜΝα, ΤΕΡΟΝ ΔāΒΙΡ ΤΑΛΛΕΜēΚΙΝ?*
essi baaro aa jomna, teron jabir tallemeekin?

⁶⁸⁰ From St70; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 33: "Water runs from the steep place."

⁶⁸¹ From St32; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki, Khālid Karār, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ. According to the Mattokki poet 'Abd al-Min'am 'Awaḍ from Merwaw the text is from the Mattokki poet Sha'bān 'Awaḍ.

essi baa=ro aag jom-na ...
 water plot=LOC PROG beat-Q:NEUT
ter=on jabi=ro talle-mee-ki-n
 3SG=CO:COND channel=LOC walk-NEG-COND-3SG:SUB
 Does the water reach the [agricultural] plot, if it does not go
 through a channel [first]?

- ⇒ Without preparation and efforts no results are achieved.
 ⇒ Everything has its order.

If a young person is not happy with the way an older person wants a certain task done, he would not object directly. Instead, the proverb may be quoted.

The proverb is similar to lyrics by the Mattokki poet ‘Abdu Mīrghani.⁶⁸²

ECCI ΔΑΒΙΡ ΤΑΛΛΕΜΕΚΙΝ, ΒΑΓ Α ΔΟΥΡΝΑ.

essi jabir tallemeekin, baag aa duurna.

If the water does not go through the channel, it does not reach
 the [irrigated agricultural] plot.

M3.5 ⁶⁸³ *ECCI ΑΛΙΓΙ ΜΑΡΟCΙΛΓΙ, ΩΑΤΙΓΙ ΒΙ ΔΟΥΡΟΥ.*

essi aaligi maarosilgi, waatigi bi juusu.

essi aali=gi maa-os-il=gi ...

water [high=ACC be.not.able-PFV-PTC:IPF]=ACC

waati=gi bi juur-s-u

low=ACC TAM go-PRT2-3SG

The water that was not able [to go] the high [way], it went the
 low [way].

Ḥasan Ghazūli sung it. In some villages (e.g. Seyaale and Umbarakaab) *jabi* is replaced by *jabe*.

⁶⁸² ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ p.c.

⁶⁸³ From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’s sister, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rahīm’s sister; variant from ‘Amm Sali and his wife. Variant readings of *maarosilgi* are: ‘Amm Sali and his wife shorten it (*maaros*) resulting in two main clauses. Aḥmad ‘Uthmān replaces the first ACC clitic by a causal clause marker (*maarosinga*) resulting in the first clause being a clausal subordinate clause.

- aali/waati* are Arabic loanwords and antonyms.
- bi* does not denote a future here. It points to the second clause performed after the first action was not possible.
- ⇒ He is a coward.
- ⇒ He favours the convenient way.
- ⇒ The weak one cannot hit the strong one.
- ⇒ If you want to achieve something big, you need first to accomplish the intermediate steps.
- variant *essi aaligi maaros, waatigi bi darrisu.*
The water was not able [to get up] the high [way], [and then] it got up [followed] the low [way].

4.4. Water in General

Here I list the remaining proverbs about water that do not deal with the river, the waterwheel or channelling water to the agriculture. Water under the chaff (*silti*) is considered dangerous, as it was invisible.⁶⁸⁴ Drinking water to quench the thirst in the hot climate needs to be clean, particles have to settle on the bottom first. For drinking tea, water is boiled.

A4.1⁶⁸⁵ *CIΛTIN TOΓŌN ECCL.*

siltin togoon essi.

silti=n togoor=n essi
chaff=GEN under=GEN water
water under the chaff

- ⇒ He does not show his true personality. He is different inside than outside.

English: Don't judge a book by its cover.

⁶⁸⁴ Muḥammad Şubḫi 2022, p.c.

⁶⁸⁵ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 96; and 2016: proverb 95); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

A4.2 ⁶⁸⁶ *ECCIN KŌYĪCIP KIΔΔIN.*

essin kuusir kiddin.

essi=n kuus=ir kiddi-n

water=GEN cup=LOC drown-3SG

He drowns in a cup of water.

⇒ He believes everything.

SCA: *يغرق في شبر موية.* – “He drowns in a span’s depth of water.”

A4.3 ⁶⁸⁷ *ΩITEN ECCI ΩΑΛΛΑ ΒΑΓŌNN ICIFE.*

shiten essi wala bagoonn ising.

shite-n essi wala bagoon-n ising

winter=GEN water or summer=GEN fat

The water of the winter or the fat of the summer.

essi – ising In winter the water is very cold. In summer one does not want to eat fat food, with *ising* variant of *isin*.

⇒ Encouragement to drink cold water in winter. It is better than a full meal in summer.

M4.1 ⁶⁸⁸ *CIΛTIN TOΓŌP EP TĀME ECCI ME?*

siltin togoor er taame essi me?

silti=na togoor er taame essi me

chaff=GEN under <idiom> water Q:NEG:FOC

Isn’t it that under the chaff there is the water?

er taame is an idiom that cannot be literally translated. It means roughly ‘it looks as if it is’, ‘it is not clear’.

⇒ His inside is different from his outward appearance. Be careful!

⁶⁸⁶ From ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Merowaarti East. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 346.

⁶⁸⁷ From Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Hamennaarti.

⁶⁸⁸ From Bilāl Zakariya, West Sehel; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi, Asmaa A. Kenawy.

⇒ The situation looks safe, yet be careful.

M4.2 ⁶⁸⁹ *ΕCΚΙ ΚΙΡΙΓ ΓΟΝ, ΚΙΝΝΑ ΝΑΖΑΡΟ ἄ ΚΟΥΔΔΕ.*

essi kirig goon, kinna naharo aa kudde.

essi kirig goon kinna naharo aag kudde-Ø
water dung SUB short while PROG be.pure-3SG

Although the water [contains] dung, after a short while it is pure.

kirig Dried dung in small quantities settles on the bottom of a water storage jar, so that after a while the water can be drunk.

⇒ Currently you are angry with others, soon you will be fine again.

⇒ Soon your big problem will be solved.

M4.3 ⁶⁹⁰ *ΜΑΝΔΟΝ ΕCΚΙΓΙ ΝΙΔΙΛ, ΩΑΛΛΑ ΩΙΔΕ ἄ ΤἈΜΝΟΥ.*

mandon essigi niidil, walla wide aa taamnu.

mando=na essi=gi nii-ed-il ...
there=GEN water=ACC drink-PFV-PTC:IPF
walla wide aag taar-munu
CO return PROG come-NEG

Nevertheless the one who has drunk the water of there [outside] does not return and come [home].

⇒ A [Mattokki] Nubian who moved to another place is unlikely to return.

⇒ They changed their manners.

variant *boccin essigi niisa.*

They drank the water of the outside [foreign places].

⁶⁸⁹ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān. Asmaa A. Kenawy replaces *kinna naharo* by *asalgi* ‘tomorrow’.

⁶⁹⁰ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. Goo-Grauer; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Urābi; second variant from Thābit Zāki and other men from Umbarakaab. I am grateful for intensive discussions on this proverb.

Mothers and wives in pre-*hijra* Lower Nubia were eagerly expecting the return of their sons and husbands who had gone to Lower Egypt to find work. Too much could detain them, as also expressed in proverb M5.5. This is why even when a son had remained poor, at his return his mother warmly welcomed him. Accordingly, when the German medical doctor Elizabeth Herzfeld who lived and worked in the Mattokki village Dakke (1958-1963) told the story of the Prodigal Son from the Gospel according to Luke, the women felt emotionally affected, as it tells of a departing family member to return unexpectedly.⁶⁹¹

There is a more recent version of the saying, reversing its literary meaning:

variant *mandon essigi niidil, awwittiged aa taa.*

The one who drank the water of there [outside] comes a second time.

As the Egyptian Nubian villages are closer to Lower Egypt than prior to the *hijra*, many Nubians now return to their home villages more frequently. The variant reflects the changed environment and recalls the similar Egyptian Arabic proverb: “He who drinks from the water of the Nile will return.”

That became obvious when checking the proverb in a group setting in a teahouse in Umbarakaab. Aḥmad ‘Urābi was introduced as someone knowledgeable in proverbs. He used the first version of the proverb with everyone else opposing him. Aḥmad ‘Urābi stood his ground.

M4.4 ⁶⁹² *TINN ECCIFI NĪ BŌȲ.*

tinn essigi nii buu.

tinna essi=gi nii buu-Ø

3PL:POSS water=ACC drink PROG-3SG

He drinks their water.

⇒ He does it as the others do.

⇒ He belongs to them.

⇒ He understands them well.

⁶⁹¹ LAUCHE 2010; A. Goo-Grauer 2022, p.c.

⁶⁹² From ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim, Dakke.

M4.5 ⁶⁹³ *ΦΑΛΓΟΝ ΕΣΣΙΡ ἄ ΚΙΔΔΙ.*

falgon essir aa kiddi.

falgo=na essi=ro aag kiddi-Ø

falgo=GEN water=LOC PROG drown-3SG

He drowns in the water of the *falgo*.

falgo is a word out of use, also missing in Massenbach's (1933) dictionary. The Mattokki students attach the glossing 'span of hand' to it. It symbolises a tiny amount of water where drowning is impossible.

⇒ He is unlucky.

⇒ He cannot resolve even the smallest problem or difficulty.

Literally, the corresponding ECA proverb expresses the opposite:

MSA: .سيعوم في شبر ماء. – "He will swim in a span of water."

M4.6 ⁶⁹⁴ *ΕΣΣΙ ΔΟΓΟΡ ἄ ΚΟΥΣΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

essi dogoor aa kujmunu.

essi dogoor aag kuj-munu

water above PROG be.up-NEG

The water does not boil [from] above.

⇒ Strange things do not happen.

English: Pigs don't fly.

The proverb reminds Aḥmad 'Uthmān of lyrics performed by the singer Ḥasan Ghazūli.

⁶⁹³ From St67; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ. Cf. M10.12 and MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 154. The last interpretation is taken from there. The MSA proverb is taken from BURCKHARDT 2012[1875]: proverb 746.

⁶⁹⁴ From St20; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid. It has the opposite meaning to A5.16 and A6.6 and M10.1.

- M4.7** ⁶⁹⁵ *ENN ΔΟΓŌΡ CĪΛΕΛ, ΔΑΝΝ ΔΟΓŌΡ ΝΑΚΚΕΛ.*
enn dogoor siilel, ann dogoor nakkel.
er=na dogoor siil-el an=na dogoor nakki-el
 2SG=GENabove flow-PTC:PF 1SG=GENabove drip-PTC:PF
 The one who flowed upon you who dripped upon me.
- siil* means both ‘to flow’ and ‘to drip’. It signifies water that flows or drips over a surface. It is a larger amount than *nakki*.
- ⇒ I (being a poor person) wish that from a wealthy person’s abundance something may flow to me.

- M4.8** ⁶⁹⁶ *ΕΝΝΑΝ ΧĒΡΡΟ ΚΙΔΔΙ ΔΟΥΚΚΙCΟΥ.*
ennan xeerro kiddi dukkisū.
enna=na xeer=ro kiddi dukki-s-u
 2SG:POSS=GEN generosity=LOC drown pull.out-PRT2-1PL
 In your generosity we drowned and pulled out.
- ⇒ You, father, were rich and generous with your family.

4.5. Agriculture: Farming

In the Nubian Nile Valley a large part of economics and sociocultural traits are based on agriculture (*ewre/ewrar*). Until a few decades ago, most Nubians worked on the irrigated land as farmers (*turbal*), their meagre income being supplemented by some small-scale animal husbandry.⁶⁹⁷ Only some farmers would keep a cow for diary, or an ox for turning the waterwheel. Nearly all Nubian farmers were subsistence farmers as

[t]here used to be extraordinary fragmentation of land ownership, brought about by Islamic laws of inheritance, ... Every kind of profitable agriculture [was] nearly impossible.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁵ From Yahya ‘Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

⁶⁹⁶ From Asmaa A. Kenawy, Elephantine Island.

⁶⁹⁷ Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2015, p.c.; El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2015, p.c.

⁶⁹⁸ HERZOG 1957a: 138; in the German original: “Einmal besteht eine unvorstellbare Zersplitterung des Grundbesitzes, den das islamische Erbrecht ... herbeigeführt

Therefore in the Dongola Reach the harvest, mainly dates, was often pledged to Arab traders, the so-called *sheel* system. It disadvantaged the farmers as the price of agricultural products was fixed at harvest time when it was lowest. Still, most farmers were able to store enough food to feed themselves and their families.⁶⁹⁹ In spite of the relative poverty, the term *turbal* does not carry any negative connotation like the Egyptian Arabic *fallāḥ* (farmer, peasant); it is considered “the most honorable work”.⁷⁰⁰

In Nubia agricultural land consisted of limited plots closer to the river than the Nubian dwellings, due to its rarity highly valuable, extended by irrigated land. The farmer would say in the morning: *ay togoor bi nogri*. ‘I walk down’; meaning ‘I walk to my fields.’⁷⁰¹ In Lower Nubia farmers “were able to see [their land] all the time from their houses. The setting allowed for a continuous and direct relationship with the natural.”⁷⁰² Each house had a small garden, about 4 m by 4 m. There grew onions, tomatoes, and, if possible, some fruit trees. It was protected by a mud wall about 1 m high.

Before the introduction of artificial fertilisers, dung and manure (*kamkoro/karkaram*; *maro/maroo*) were needed. *kamkoro/karkaram* is the camel’s, donkey’s, goat’s or sheep’s dung, available in any Nubian village. *maro/maroo* is manure taken from old building foundations, or found in the salty desert earth.⁷⁰³

Since the demise of the medieval Nubian kingdoms and their respective capitals, until a few decades ago there were nearly no alternatives to working as a farmer or as the overseer of farmers (*samed*) whose relationship was more

hat. ... Jede rentable Landwirtschaft [war] nahezu unmöglich.” Nevertheless, farmers may have been content with their way of subsistence farming. (A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.)

⁶⁹⁹ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

⁷⁰⁰ The 85-year old Fadijja Am Gamal Shifa (p.c.) in YASSER OSMAN 1990: 110.

⁷⁰¹ ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2020, p.c.; Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.

⁷⁰² YASSER OSMAN 1990: 180; similar YASSER OSMAN 1990: 217. By contrast, in the resettlement villages most agricultural land lies quite a distance away from the house.

⁷⁰³ The process is also mentioned in SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 61.

cooperative than hierarchical.⁷⁰⁴ Artisans and craftsmen worked part-time, the remainder being spent in agriculture. Many Nubians did not become traders unless absolutely necessary, or at most petty traders.⁷⁰⁵

The city of Aswan in the north where other work would have been available was located outside of Nubia; Wadi Halfa only became a town when the British built the railway in around 1900, and modern-day Dongola town was founded by the Mamelukes immigrating from Egypt in the 19th century. Only when leaving the Dongola Reach did some Nubians become merchants in other parts of the Sudan, the famous Northern Sudanese itinerants named after their clothing, *jallāba*.⁷⁰⁶

Besides the waterwheel, *kole/kolee* denotes the irrigated agricultural land. “Ownership of land was important in determining a person’s status in his community.”⁷⁰⁷ Communal ownership of the waterwheel and the agricultural land created a close-knit network of relationships. It rarely changed. Until recently marriage partners were usually selected among the same kinship group, and therefore possession was merely passed on. No soil was sold to a nomadic Arab who wanted to settle, it went against the Nubian perception of honour. Even today in the Dongola Reach, when a Nubian moves outside of his village, his relatives work the soil, returning it when he comes back.⁷⁰⁸

Land ownership also causes bitter fights. Because of the value of agricultural land contracts are falsified and even magistrates (Ar. *’umda*) are bribed. Most lawsuits in the Northern State in the Sudan are still land disputes.⁷⁰⁹ However, in the end the communal spirit prevails:

⁷⁰⁴ SANA AL-BATAL (1994: 72) describes the *samed* as an honorary job. Alternatively the village farmers paid the *samed* by working on the irrigated land (*kole*) he was assigned.

⁷⁰⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2022, p.c.

⁷⁰⁶ HESSE 2002.

⁷⁰⁷ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 129.

⁷⁰⁸ Samuel Ali Hissein is one example. After living for twenty years outside of Nubia in the late 19th century he returned home and received his share of land.

⁷⁰⁹ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; Ja’far Muḥammad 2023, p.c.

Though bitter enmity between some [Nubian] families exists in most villages, usually owing to some dispute as to ownership of their meagre land, their whole life is conducted communally by the inhabitants of a village, all joining together in joy and in sorrow, festivals and mourning.⁷¹⁰

From an early age onward children helped with the farm work:

Therefore, every Nubian would learn the art of agriculture when he or she was seven old. ... by the time young men left their region ... they would have already become knowledgeable farmers.⁷¹¹

One woman from the Dongola Reach who nowadays works as a medical doctor remembered her daily routine as a child. She got up, scared the birds from the fields, walked to school (7 am until 1 pm), returned, ate lunch, helped in the fields or collected firewood, and some more school (4 pm until 7 pm). In her memories Nubian children were smart, and memorised everything during school time with no need for homework.⁷¹²

Millet (*durra*; *mare/maree*) was the preferred crop.⁷¹³ A retired well-educated Dongolawi living in a farming area says: Nowadays, millet is hardly ever cultivated in the Dongola Reach, in spite of being healthier and growing faster than wheat and storable for up to four years. Contemporary Nubians favour wheat that is mainly grown for personal consumption. Broad beans are a cash crop, almost only planted for the market. Millet has become cattle feed.⁷¹⁴

⁷¹⁰ TRIMINGHAM 1949: 8.

⁷¹¹ SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 83. The author is a Nubian from Mahas. I consider her article as the best in-depth introduction into Nubian agriculture.

⁷¹² Sayida ‘Abd al-Khāliq p.c. to E. Jaeger, 2009.

⁷¹³ VANTINI (2009: 158) writes about one attempt to conquer Nubia: Shams “realized that the country [of Nubia] had no satisfactory resources to compensate for the effort of conquest, and that their only food was *durra*. When he saw that there was no other crop and witnessed the hard life of the Nubians ..., he decided to give up ...” Two hundred years ago BURCKHARDT (1819: 22) writes: “the poor Nubians cultivate, on the narrow shore, *Dhourra*”.

⁷¹⁴ al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl 2010, p.c.; also Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c.

In northern Lower Nubia cultivation of millet already ceased with the construction of the Aswan Dam in 1902 as it needed three months of growth, impossible with the short periods between descent and rise of the Aswan Dam water reservoir. Also the soil was less fertile as inhabitants had to move higher up into the hills. Samuel Ali Hissein laments the change in agriculture in comparison to before 1902: “One cannot imagine the sacrifices they make for this useless, narrow, stony land.”⁷¹⁵

Among Sudanese academics so-called ‘traditional’ agriculture as described in Nubian proverbs is blamed for low agricultural output in the Sudan, as described by two lecturers from the University of Khartoum:

... the traditional sector employs about 65% of the Sudanese agricultural labour force, however, its contribution to the agricultural GD falls short relative to the proportion of population depending on it. It contributed an average of 15% to agricultural GD during the period between 2000 and 2006, while the proportions of population depending on it during the same period were 70% of the total agricultural population, which shows the need for enhancing the efficiency of production ...⁷¹⁶

While this refers to the situation of the entire Sudan, north and south, it also describes the state of agriculture in the Dongola Reach. These deficiencies should be overcome through mechanisation, globalisation, “commercialisation and monetisation.”⁷¹⁷ However, that also results in customary structures as described in the Andaandi proverbs being less and less observed. These days, outside the home it is mostly only men who work in agriculture, increasingly part-time. As more children go to school, less time is left for agriculture, especially as “the school’s long vacation coincides with the off-

⁷¹⁵ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1909: 14; in the German original: “Man kann sich nicht vorstellen, welche Opfer sie um dieses ihr unbrauchbares, enges, steiniges Land bringen.” It is worth reading the whole lament written by an insider.

⁷¹⁶ KHALID SIDDIG and BABIKER 2011: 7.

⁷¹⁷ RYAN and JAEGER et al 2021: 32.

season of the agricultural cycle”.⁷¹⁸ Among grown-up children, frequently one male descendent remains in the home village to continue farming while his siblings move elsewhere and provide support where income from agriculture may not be sufficient.

Still nowadays in the Dongola Reach a walk from a village to the river is a feast for the urban researcher’s eyes. The irrigated fields, the newly-sown grain, the broad beans (Ar. *fīl*) in flower, the millet sheaves tied together to serve as a windbreak by the cattle stalls create an outwardly idyllic setting. A number of men are enticing their small livestock into the pens, where the animals are protected from the sun or spend the night.

However, a farmer’s life, past and present, has been less romantic. Due to the sheer amount of work a farmer frequently only manages to rest when travelling by boat to or from an island, or when tools are being repaired, or when getting old and being supported by his children. Once after sunset in the Dongola Reach I met a farmer returning home from his work on the fields. He was so tired that he could not even eat the food prepared by his children. Another farmer in the Dongola Reach rests mainly when he is injured. Of course, life is interspersed with religious feast days and wedding celebrations.⁷¹⁹

Since the demise of the waterwheel, the advent of the irrigation pump (Ar. *bābūr*) and mechanized farming through financial support by Nubians working in the Arab Gulf, there are other factors making agriculture draining, even to the point that it becomes financially unrewarding. In the Sudan “[s]oils are exhausted and there has been a serious trend toward declining crop productivity.” Also, “[t]hough water is plentiful and pests are few, shortages of fertilizer and fuel for irrigation pumps have been frequent obstacles.”⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 83. Farm work is regulated by the river’s annual cycle of low tide and flood. Most of the planting and harvesting is done from winter until June. July and August are very hot.

⁷¹⁹ Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Karīm 2018, p.c. As there is less work farmers in the Dongola Reach prefer weddings to take place during July and August.

⁷²⁰ FEGLEY 2011: 122; based on a map showing the environmental context of development in the Sudan in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Also FEGLEY 2011: 119.

Such statements are confirmed by a Dongolawi farmer when talking about his harvests in 2009: Wheat grew well. However, much fewer sacks of broad beans were harvested as the winter was not cold enough, detrimental to a good harvest of broad beans. In future he did not expect better yields as he expected another warm winter. Weeds grew better than potatoes, onions and tomatoes. For the last fifteen years no millet had been grown in his village at all as the birds ate it up.⁷²¹ A few farmers in the Dongola Reach consider the newly constructed Merowe High Dam that holds back the fertile soil of the annual Nile flood an additional reason for low yields. Could global warming be another cause?

Among the Mattokki in Lower Nubia the building of the Aswan High Dam had similar effects. In the resettlement villages:

... their age-old agricultural system has disappeared. ... there is no Nile ... Water for irrigation and household usage is delivered via a huge canal ...⁷²²

Contemporary Mattokki living in the resettlement villages seldom engage in agriculture. One Mattokki who owns some feddan far away from his home regularly visits it, but pays *Ša'īdi* Egyptians to cultivate it. In his opinion, the younger generation of Mattokki does not even know where their fields are as they lack interest in farming.⁷²³ In the words of an Egyptian anthropologist:

Farming appears to signify the past for the young; leaving the land is a sign of progress and modernisation.⁷²⁴

Egyptian Nubians themselves mention some reasons why nowadays they are much less engaged in agriculture. All of them have to do with the *hijra*:

- While prior to the *hijra* fields were close to the house, nowadays most of the agricultural land allocated lies far away. For women working the fields became impossible as farm work moved from the private area, their trusted family environment, into the public domain.

⁷²¹ Farmer from the southern Dongola Reach 2010, p.c.

⁷²² ABDEL HALIM SABBAR 2017: without page number.

⁷²³ Ajīb Jabāli 2017, p.c.

⁷²⁴ HUSSEIN FAHIM 1983: 142.

- When relocated in 1964 the promised agricultural land was not ready for farming. As a result the resettled Nubians looked elsewhere for work.
- Due to the socialist politics of the Egyptian government in the 1960s, some of the Mattokki farmers owning comparatively extended cultivated land prior to the *hijra* were not provided with new plots after the *hijra*, whereas poorer Mattokki who had less experience in farming were given preferential treatment.
- After the *hijra*, the Egyptian government demanded a certain rota of cash crops based on state planning. Some of the plants, such as the labor-intensive sugarcane, were unknown prior to the *hijra*. As a result, Nubian farmers outsourced the agricultural work to *Ṣa'īdi* Egyptians who had more experience with these kinds of crops.
- Prior to the *hijra*, the agricultural economy was mainly conducted by women. They owned most of the land informally. In the resettlement villages, women were not properly compensated and the Egyptian government even directed their support toward men who were already used to work in the employment sector.⁷²⁵

In Egypt food surpluses are encouraged and managed by the government. As a result, agriculture is performed in a much more hierarchical setting, in contrast to the Nubian desire to avoid hierarchies.

In conclusion, when purchasing on a market stall from a Mattokki merchant nowadays it is nearly always non-food or processed food products. Only in the Dongola market do we find some Dongolawi farmers selling their products.

A5.1 ⁷²⁶ *MEṢEMEA ANṬŌḌAN EWPE ḌĀPIN TANḌEGI AḌḌO
MEPKON.*

mehemed antoodn ewre jaarin tancegi addo merkon.

⁷²⁵ Additional source AGHA 2019: 4.

⁷²⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 74; and 2016: proverb 73); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

mehemed an-tood=n ewre ...
 <name> 1SG:POSS-son=GEN agriculture
jaar-i=n tance=gi ay=ro mer-ko-n
 neighbour-PL=GEN alms=ACC 1SG=LOC cut-PRT1-3SG
 My son Mehemed's agriculture stopped the neighbours' alms
 to me.

jaar A neighbour provides support when necessary.
tance usually means 'taste'. Here it is used in the sense of 'alms'.
 ⇒ When a man has work, or at least one of his relatives, others
 outside the family expect him to be self-sufficient. They no
 longer provide necessities, even when he has run out of food.

A5.2 ⁷²⁷ *BAZĪT EWĪPKIN, KORKOTTIP WΟΥΓΟΥPIN.*

bahiit ewirkin, korkottir shugurin.
bahiit ewir-ki-n korkotti=r shugur-in
 <name> plant-COND-3SG dried.silt=LOC descend-3SG
 When [farmer] Bakhiiit is planting, it [the seed] falls in the
 dried silt.

bahiit see proverb A3.7.
korkotti is the soil right next to the river Nile that shortly after the Nile
 flood is especially fertile. In the hot climate it dries out quickly
 after the river recedes and shows cracks. The seed that falls there
 produces no yield. It becomes useless.⁷²⁸
 ⇒ He always has bad luck.

A5.3 ⁷²⁹ *TENN KOLEGON EWĪPIN, BOYCOYΓ TENΔIGON CŌYΔΟΥN.*
tenn kolegon ewirin, busug tendigon suudun.

⁷²⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 86; and 2016: proverb 85); co-investigated
 with Muḥammad Ḥasan, 'Awaḍ Ḥasan.

⁷²⁸ TAHA A. TAHA 2012: 10. In SCA *korkotti* becomes *karkarati/karkati*.

⁷²⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 161); co-investigated with 'Awaḍ Ḥasan,
 Kamal Hussein.

tenn kole=gon ewir-in ...
 3SG:POSS irrigated.land=CO plant-3SG
busug tendi=gon suud-un
 leather.bag 3SG:POSS=CO empty-COP

He plants the irrigated land, but his leather bag is empty.

busug is used for storing grain, in the past also water.⁷³⁰ It was usually made from cow's skin; nowadays also from other materials.

-un completes the nominal sentence for 2/3SG. 1SG is *eri*, PL is *-rin*.

⇒ Although working hard he does not earn anything.

A5.4⁷³¹ *ΕΚΚΙ ΨΕΓΜΕΝ ΔΑΝΔΟ, ΒΕΡΜΕΝ!*

ekki shegmen daando, beermen!

er=gi sheg-men daa=n=ro beer-men
 2SG=ACC plant-NEG home=GEN=LOC grow-IMP:NEG

At the house where they did not plant you, do not grow!

⇒ Don't become curious!

English: Don't take lids off cans of worms. – Let sleeping dogs lie.

A5.5⁷³² *ΤΟΥΡΒΑΛ ΚΟΥΒΝ ΑΡΓΟΝ ΤΑΒΙΝΤΟΥΡΚΟΝ ΜΕΝΙΛΛΟ ΝΕΩΜΟΥΝ.*

turbal kubn aargon tabintuurkon menillo neewemun.

turbal kub=n aar=gon ...
 farmer boat=GEN bank=CO
tabintuu=r=gon menil=ro neewe-mun
 smithy=LOC=CO except=LOC rest-NEG

⁷³⁰ GRAUER 1968: 125.

⁷³¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 71; and 2016: proverb 70); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Shawqi 'Abd al-'Azīz.

⁷³² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 75; and 2016: proverb 74); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Further input from the Dongolawi artist Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c.

The farmer does not rest except at the moorings and in the smithy.

kubn aar Literally ‘(river) bank of the boat’. While waiting at the moorings for the boat to arrive and take one to an island or any more distant place a farmer Nubian may rest. The moorings is a metaphor for any place of rest; the boat for financial stability.

⇒ A farmer’s work is very hard. Whereas government employees finish their work at 3 pm, a farmer has to work all day.

A5.6⁷³³ *ΤΟΥΡΒΑΛ ΤΙΝΕΝ ΟΨΜΟΥΝ.*

turbal tineen onymun.

turbal *tin-een* *ony-mun*
farmer 3SG:POSS-mother weep-NEG

The farmer does not mourn his mother.

⇒ A farmer is very busy and does not have time for anything else.

⇒ A farmer should not be blamed for not observing all customs.

⇒ All things must be put according to their proper priorities.

In Nubian society attending a funeral is even more obligatory than being present at a wedding. Absence is not forgiven by the community and may lead to future exclusion. On the other hand, at the time of the waterwheel the period allocated for irrigating one’s plots was severely limited. So any funeral put a farmer in a dilemma. He had to be away from the field for three to seven days, the duration in which he had to receive visitors.

A5.7⁷³⁴ *ΜΑΡΕΝ ΤΟΥΓΕΔ ΔΑΛ, ΒΟΥΔΤΕΔ ΒΕΛΙΝ.*

maren tuuged daal, buudted belin.

⁷³³ From AHMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 115, is the same. The last interpretation and some of the further explanations are taken from there. I did not hear any ACC suffix.

⁷³⁴ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 89; and 2016: proverb 88); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

mare=n tuu=ged daa-il ...
 millet=GEN inside=INS be.present-PTC:IPF
buud=ged bel-in
 clear.space=INS leave-3SG

The one who is inside the millet [field] leaves it [into the] open space.

buud is the place between the palm grove and the houses of a village.

⇒ Everything that is hidden will come into the open.

English: Be sure your sin will find you out.

A5.8 ⁷³⁵ *ωὦ ΜΑΝ ΔΕΝΝ ΙΛΛΕΝ ΤΕΡΙ!*

woo man jenn illen teeri!
woo man jen=n ille=n teeri
 INT DEM year=GEN wheat=GEN grain

O, the grain of the wheat of that [former] year!

⇒ Exclamation when meeting a nice person after a long time.

The person from whom one was separated for a long period is compared to the valuable grain of the years when the grain harvest was insufficient.

A5.9 ⁷³⁶ *ΙΛΛΕΝ ΚΑΡΑΜ, ΑΦΝΟΥΝΓΙ ΙΓΙΔΔΙΡΟΥ.*

illen karam, afnuungi igiddiru.
ille=n karam afnuun=gi igiddi-r-u
 wheat=GEN SUB watercress=ACC give.drink-NEUT-1PL

Because of the wheat, we give the watercress to drink.

ille Not only the food crop, but everything else in the irrigated plot, including the watercress, receives water and hence grows.

⇒ Anybody who goes with an influential person receives the same preferential treatment.

⁷³⁵ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 41); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

⁷³⁶ From Abāthīr ‘Abdullahi, Agade; co-investigated with Fu’ād ‘Akūd.

A5.10 ⁷³⁷ *KĀN ΔΕΡΝ ΓΑΦΦΑΡΙΝ ΔΟΓŌΡ, KĀN ΟΓΟΛΝ ΜΕΡΜΕΤΤΙ ΓΕΝΟΥΝ.*

kaan jern gangarin dogoor, kaan ogoln mermetti genun.

kaa=n jer=n gangari=n dogoor ...
house=GEN back=GEN wheat.nearly.ripe=GEN COMP
kaa=n ogol=n mermetti gen-un
house=GEN front=GEN millet.unripe better-COP

The unripe millet in front of the house is better than the nearly ripe wheat behind the house.

gangari can also mean nearly ripe corn. It is either grilled or cooked in boiling water and then eaten.

mermetti Some of the unripe millet turns black and becomes unusable. Nevertheless, it is preferable to almost ripe wheat. When the proverb originated, millet was considered more valuable than wheat, unlike today.

⇒ What is before my eyes is better than what is far away.

⇒ Someone living close by (e.g. a neighbour) is better than a relative far away (even if he is a direct brother).

SCA: *ام صلومبايتي و لا كديكاي زول.*
 “My small thin rat is better than others’ fat rats.”

ECA: *إللي في جيبك أقرب من إللي في جيب غيرك.*
 “What is in your pocket is nearer than what is in other people’s pockets.”

English: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

variant *kaan ogol habid, kaan jer bentin dogoor genun.*
 The date palm behind the house is better than the shrub in front of the house.

habid usually signifies the apple of Sodom, but also other shrubs.

⁷³⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 93; and 2016: proverb 92); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Thourya Muḥammad; variant from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI.

A5.11 ⁷³⁸ *KOKKŌCKI COYNNEKIPKON.**kokkooski sunnekirkon.**kokkoos=gi sunne-kir-ko-n*

cotton.seed=ACC smell-CAUS-PRT1-3SG

He caused [me] to smell the cotton seed.

kokkoos The smell of the cotton reminds one of poppy seeds. Until the 1950s cotton, a very thirsty crop, was planted in the dry and nearly rainless Dongola Reach. It was especially woven into winter textiles. Nowadays cotton is only grown in the Geziira scheme and processed in the Shendi area, mainly for scarves, as clothes from outside of the Sudan have become less expensive. It is also used as medicine.

⇒ He is a bad example to me.

⇒ He spoke in a negative way that hurt me.

⇒ He has shamed me.

⇒ He has won the victory over me.

A5.12 ⁷³⁹ *BENNAΩΟΥΓΙΝ ΟΥΛ ΑΝΜΕΝΙΛ ΔΑΓΑΔΟΥΝ.**bennawugin uul anmenil jagadun.**bennawug=in uul an-men-il jagad-un*

cotton=GEN string INCH-NEG-PTC:IPF weak-COP

That which is not a string of cotton is weak.

⇒ Something looks different than it really is. Hence, it is futile.

⇒ He looks like a religious person; however, he is not.

⁷³⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 181); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein. In some villages, especially south of Dongola, *sunne* is replaced by its variant *sunde.*; and *-kir* by *-giddi*.

⁷³⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 136); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Ḥamed.

A5.13 ⁷⁴⁰ ΒΑΦΥΪΔ ΟΥC ΔΩΡΑΝΚΑΪ ΛΑΒΛΑΒΝΑΖΑΔ, ΤΟΥΡ ΓΟΥΡΚΙΝ.

banynyiid uus ashrankay lablaabnahad, tuur gurkin.

banynyi-iid uus ashrankay lablaab=nahad ...

speak-NR bad bean hyacinth.bean=SIM

tuu=r gurki-n

stomach=LOC constrict-3SG

Bad speech is like the hyacinth bean, it coils in the stomach.

lablaab is similar to its Latin name: ‘lablab purpureus’. When not prepared properly it upsets the stomach.

⇒ Bad speech lies heavy in the stomach.

English: I feel it in the pit of my stomach.

A5.14 ⁷⁴¹ ΔΑΓΑΔΤΙ, ΚΑΨΥΪ ΩΕΡΚΟΝ ΙΝΔΕΔ ΩΙΔΙΝ, ΙΝΤΙΛΛΕ
ΩΕΡΚΟΝ ΚΙΔΔΙΓΙΡΙΝ.

*jagadi, kashshi weerkon inded widin, intille weerkon
kiddigirin.*

jagad=gi kashshi weer=gon indi-ed wide-in ...

weak=ACC dried.stalk one=CO carry-PFV swim-3SG

intille weer=gon kiddi-gir-in

needle one=CO drown-CAUS-3SG

The weak [person], while one dried stalk has carried [him] and [he has] swam, one needle makes [him] drown.

wide usually means ‘to return’; here ‘to swim’.

⇒ A weak person can be saved by a little (represented by the stalk) whereas he cannot be saved by a very little (represented by the needle).

⁷⁴⁰ From AHMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Fagīri Muḥammad, Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

⁷⁴¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 38); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. When speaking Hāmid Khabīr contracts *widin* to *wedin*.

⇒ As the Sudan was drowning it had to accept the peace with Israel brokered by the US.⁷⁴²

English: A drowning person will clutch at a straw.

A5.15 ⁷⁴³ *ΑΡΙΔΤΙ ΓΩΥΨΒΙΛ, ΚΑΩΨΙΓΙ ΜΙCΙΡΜΟΥΝ.*

aridti guunycil, kashshigi misirmun.

arid=gi guunyci-il kashshi=gi misir-mun
ground=ACC watch-PTC:IPF dried.stalk=ACC overlook-NEG

The one who watches the ground does not fail to notice the dried stalk.

⇒ Curiosity reveals what one would rather not know. That is why it is better not to find out everything about other people's lives.

English: to poke one's nose into somebody else's business

A5.16 ⁷⁴⁴ *ΚΑΜΚΟΡΟ ΨΟΥΚΚΙΚΙΝ, ΚΟΡΟΔΤΟΝ ΓΑΪΩΙΝ.*

kamkoro shukkikin, korodton gaawin.

kamkoro shukki-ki-n korod=gon gaaw-in
dung sink-COND-3SG pebbles=CO ascend-3SG

When the [animal] dung sinks, and the pebbles ascend.

kamkoro Animal dung has less weight than water and therefore rises to the top.

⇒ Strange things happen.

English: Pigs might fly.

⁷⁴² REEM ABBAS 2020 discusses the application of this proverb in that specific context.

⁷⁴³ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 88; and 2016: proverb 87); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

⁷⁴⁴ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 98; and 2016: proverb 97); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein. The first one replaces *shukki* by *shugur* with similar meaning. The proverb has the same meaning as A6.6 and M10.1. During the digital NubiaFest in 2020, Elyas Khalil mentioned the Halfawi variant.

A5.17 ⁷⁴⁵ *ΕΝ ΚΕΛΛΟ ΤΕΒ!*

enn keello teeb!

enn keel=ro teeb-Ø

2SG:POSS border=LOC stop-IMP:SG

Stay within your border!

keel denotes the border of one's farmland.

⇒ Know your limitations!

The proverb is especially said when two Nubians have a tough discussion.

M5.1 ⁷⁴⁶ *ΤΕΡΑΡΚΙ, ΤΕΡΑΡΡΟ ΩΕΡΙ ΤΑΚΑ ΑΝΝ ΑΖΑΡΡΟ Α
ΛΟΥΦΦΕΡΑ.*

teerarki, teerarro weeri taaka ann aaharro aa luffeera.

teerar-ki teerar=ro weer-i taar-ka ...

cultivate-COND cultivation=LOC one-PL come-CO

anna aaharro aag luffee-r-a

1SG:POSS after PROG throw.LV-NEUT-3PL

When I cultivate [near the river], in the cultivation some [people] come and throw after me.

teerarki teerarro keeps the musical rhythm. *teer* means 'to hoe the river bank mud before sowing; till the fields by the river, nominalized *teerar*.

luffee MASSENBACH (1933: 123) regards it as a Nubian word. However, words of Nubian origin do not begin with *l*.

-ka marks a converb construction. In West Sehel it becomes *-erkan*.

⇒ I work and others make my life difficult.

⇒ He is doing the same as me so that he can claim the benefit.

⁷⁴⁵ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb.

⁷⁴⁶ From Muḥammad Ajīb, Gurte; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi. Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid replaces *aaharro* by *aaharke*.

M5.2 ⁷⁴⁷ *TENN* ἀΡΙΔ ΜΕΝΙΛΛΟΥ ΖῶΛ ΤΟΥΒΡῸΓ ἄ ΔΟΜΝΑ?
tenn arid menillu zool tubroog aa jomna?
tenna arid menillu zool tubroo=gi ...
 3SG:POSS soil except person hoe=ACC
aag jom-na
 PROG beat-Q:NEUT
 Does a person [farmer] hack [with] the hoe except his own soil?

menillu is a variant of *meenil*, depending on the speaker.

tubroo Still today the hoe is a metaphor for agricultural work.⁷⁴⁸

⇒ I only know my own work. Hence, I do not pretend to be able to perform the work of others.

⇒ I only do my own task.

⇒ Mind your own business.

When discussing the proverb in a rented flat the tenant said that he would buy new windows for the flat if he were the owner, but not for a rented flat. The proverb fits such a situation. The underlying thought is applied to other topics.

M5.3 ⁷⁴⁹ *ΣΕΡΙΝΓΟΝ* ἄΓ, ἰλλε ἰᾶ ἀΝΜΟΥΝΟΥ.
seringon aag, ille yaa anmunu.

⁷⁴⁷ From Umm ‘Umar Ḥasan, Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Faḍl Aḥmad. The proverb is part of the lyrics written by the late Mattokki poet ‘Abdu Mīrghani and performed by the late Mattokki singer Ḥasan Ghazūli. Ḥammad Nūr replaces the POSS *tenna* by *inna* (2SG:POSS) and the Q suffix *-na* by the IMP suffix *-men*, giving the meaning: “Do not hack [with] the hoe except what is your (POL:PL) own land!”

⁷⁴⁸ The hoe was used by a music ensemble from the Egyptian Nubian village Toshke when dancing at the opening ceremony of an international conference for folklore at the Cairo Opera in 2014.

⁷⁴⁹ From St71; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki, Maḥmūd Muḥammad, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ, Muharram al-Ṭayyib, Faḍl Aḥmad. The proverb is part of the lyrics written by the late Mattokki poet ‘Abdu Mīrghani and performed by the late Mattokki singer Ḥasan Ghazūli. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 766.

serin=gon aag-Ø ille aag an-munu
barley=CO stay-3SG wheat PROG INCH-NEG

And barley remains [barley], it does not become wheat.

serin also *seriny*. Opinions about what was more expensive, barley or wheat, differ due memories about pre-*hijra* agriculture fading. It seems that wheat was more prestigious than barley, with barley also given to donkeys.

⇒ The perfumer cannot restore what ageing spoils.⁷⁵⁰

⇒ You reap what you sow.

⇒ If you do evil (as telling lies) you cannot expect a positive outcome.

⇒ One stays what one is.

English: The leopard can't change its spots.

The proverb reminds two Mattokki of the lyrics by the Mattokki poet 'Abdu Mīrghani sang by Ḥasan Ghazūli:

ΣΕΡΙΝΓΙ ΕΩΙΡΕΛ, ΙΛΛΕΓΙ ΔΟΡΚΟΜΝΟΥ.

seringi ewirel, illegi joorkoomnu.

serin=gi ewir-el ille=gi joor-ko-munu

barley=ACC plant-PTC:PF wheat=ACC harvest-PRT1-NEG

The one who planted barley did not harvest wheat.

MSA: من جدّ وجد، ومن زرع حصد.

“Who strives earnestly he finds, and who sows he harvests.”

SCA: اللّٰي تزرعه تحصد. – “What you sow you harvest it.”

M5.4 ⁷⁵¹ ΒΙΛΛΕΝ ΙΡΙC ΩΕΡΜΑ.

billeen iris weerma.

billee=na iris weer-ma

onion=GEN odour one-COP

⁷⁵⁰ Mattokki students, handwritten ms.

⁷⁵¹ From St60; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Rahman 'Awad.

The odour of any onion is the same.

billee

The smell of any onion is considered bad.

⇒

Although these two humans are from different regions, they are both bad.

M5.5 ⁷⁵² *ΚΑΡΚΑΡΑΜ ΕΩΕΙΡ ΤΩΝ ΔΑΒΟΣΚΙ, ΑΪ ΒΙ ΤΑΡΙ.*

karkaram esheyr toon daboski, ay bi taari.

karkaram *eshey=ro toon dab-os-ki ...*

dung village=LOC from disappear-PFV-COND

ay bi taar-r-i

1SG TAM come-NEUT-1SG

When the dung will have disappeared from the village, I will come back.

⇒

I will not (never) come back.

M5.6 ⁷⁵³ *ΝΕΛΙ ΜΑΡΟΓ Ᾱ ΚΑΛΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

neli maroog aa kalmunu.

nel-i maroo=gi aag kal-munu

tooth-PL manure=ACC PROG eat-NEG

The teeth do not eat the manure.

⇒

The talk is so bad that the brain cannot take in.

M5.7 ⁷⁵⁴ *ΔΕCCE ΚΙΔΙΡ Ᾱ CΩΩΙΜΝΟΥΜ ΔΝ, ΤΕΡΟΝ CΩΩΟΔ ΕΚΙΝ ΓΩΝ, ΒΙ ΔΕCCE ΔΝΜΟΥΝΟΥΜ ΔΝ.*

desse kiidir aa sowwimnum an, teron sowwod ekin goon, bi

desse anmunum an.

⁷⁵² From ‘Ali Aḥmad ‘Ali, Elephantine Island; written down by A. Goo-Grauer.

⁷⁵³ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raziq ‘Abd al-Majīd.

⁷⁵⁴ From SCHÄFER 1935: 271, sentence 222; taken from Samuel Ali Hissein; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Khayria Mūsa, Khālīd Karār. While it was unknown to them, it is said to fit Nubian culture.

desse kiidir aag sowwi-munum an ...

green self PROG get.dry-NEG INCH

ter=on sowwi-ed e-ki-n goon ...

3SG=CO:COND get.dry-PFV be-COND-3SG SUB

bi desse an-munum an

TAM green INCH-NEG INCH

Green itself never gets dry, and if it gets dry, it will not turn [back to] green.

an is the only occurrence of the sentence final uninflected inchoative in the proverb collection. It is missing in all other language data I collected so far. *an* also occurs in the Mattokki Gospel texts from 1912⁷⁵⁵ which matches a date of collecting the proverb before World War I.

⇒ What is really healthy [alive], does not perish [die]

4.6. Agriculture: Harvesting, Milling and Storing

As in the past “[a]nimal food [wa]s rarely tasted by the Nubians”,⁷⁵⁶ the harvests of crops (*joorar*) and dates were important events in the annual cycle of a Nubian farmer. Everywhere crops were winnowed, the grains milled and the flour stored. Winnowing was observed in the early 18th century when the Franciscan monk Theodor Krump travelled to Nubia and the Sudan:

In due time the grain (of the durra) is threshed out of the husk by flails, and cleaned in the wind by the women who throw away the chaff; afterwards it is kept for a whole year for their own use and for their cattle in special baskets made out of the bark of palm-trees.⁷⁵⁷

Two Mattokki living far away from the Aswan Dam remember the time of harvesting prior to the *hijra*: Nubians owned millet fields and date palms. Big

⁷⁵⁵ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN’s 1912a-d.

⁷⁵⁶ BURCKHARDT 1819: 143.

⁷⁵⁷ HERZOG 1957b: 127. While Krump wrote in German, Herzog made his anthropological observations during his travels available in English. – According to RYAN and JAEGER et al (2021: 33) nowadays for baskets the leaves of the doum palm are preferred.

watermelons were harvested. For eight months sowing and reaping were possible, and food was stockpiled for the four months of flooding. In northern Lower Nubia life became increasingly harsher with each heightening of the Aswan Dam, shortening the time for sowing, cultivation, ripening and harvesting to three months while the water level was low enough. To fully utilise the time available, the harvest only began with the increase of the water level. Women reaped even from a boat.⁷⁵⁸

A scholar from the early 20th century describes the former way of using two millstones (*juu*; or more specific the upper one *juu/iini* and the lower one *juun tood/jaman juu*):

The upper one, held by a central peg, is rotated against the lower one by means of a second peg fixed near the rim. When the stones become blunt, they are sharpened using a hard flint.⁷⁵⁹

Not every household owned such a mill. Others had the simpler quern mill (Ar. loanword: *rahaaya*). Whenever one or the other was needed neighbours helped each other without payment.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁸ Muḥammad Dahab 2014, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2014, p.c. HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN’s (1979: 31) writes similarly about the Fadijja village of Ed Derr: “Like the forests, the pasture and cultivation areas were also reduced. If the fertile land was once barely sufficient to feed the population, life in the last stage before resettlement had become extremely meagre. ... As a result of the nine-month flooding of the riverbank, the entire cultivation and stock farming had to be completed in three months, i.e. sowing and cultivation, growth and ripening and finally the harvest.”

In the German original: “Wie die Wälder waren auch die Weide- und Anbauflächen reduziert. Reichte schon einstens das Fruchland kaum aus, die Ernährung der Bevölkerung zu gewährleisten, so war das Leben im letzten Stadium vor der Aussiedlung äusserst karg geworden. ... Infolge der neunmonatigen Überflutung des Ufergeländes war der gesamte Feldbau und die Vorratswirtschaft in drei Monaten zu bewältigen, also Aussaat und Anbau, Wachstum und Reife und schliesslich die Ernte.”

⁷⁵⁹ SCHÄFER 1935: 303; in the German original: “Auf einem runden unteren Steine wird, in der Mitte durch einen Pflock gehalten, mittels eines nahe dem Rande steckenden Pflockes der obere runde Mahlstein gedreht. Die Steine werden, wenn stumpf geworden, mit einem harten Steine geschärft.”

⁷⁶⁰ Aḥmad Hamza 2019, p.c.

One measurement unit of volume for grain is the *mashe/maashee*. At the same time it signifies a small plate made of woven date-palm leaves, used for carrying especially dates and crops.⁷⁶¹

Nubian houses have no separate pantry. Instead, nowadays in Sudanese Nubia, grain and dates are preserved in a large storage container made from Nile mud (*gussa/gussee*), also used for measuring larger quantities. Young children have to enter the storage container to fetch the remains. Storage facilities are not necessarily inside the house, they can be in the open space. That indicates mutual trust within the community.⁷⁶²

A6.1 ⁷⁶³ *ΚΑΡΣΕΛΓΙ ΟΩΩΕΛΕΝ ΔΟ̄ΡΡΑΝ.*
karjelgi owwelen joorran.
karjel=gi owwel-en joor-r-an
 ripe=ACC first-ADV harvest-NEUT-3PL
 They harvest the ripe [crop] first.

-en can be replaced by LOC clitic =*lo* or INS clitic =*ged* yet cannot be omitted.

⇒ The eldest daughter has to be married first.

A6.2 ⁷⁶⁴ *ΤΕ̄ΒΙΝ ΑΓΑΡΚΙΡ ΣΙΛΛΙ.*
teebin agarkir silli.
teeb-in agar=gir silli-n
 stop-3SG place=ALL winnow-3SG
 He remains at the place [where] he winnows.

⇒ He walks with the wind and is blown away like chaff.

⁷⁶¹ Cf. MASSENBAACH 1933: 195.

⁷⁶² Aḥmad Hamza 2017+2019, p.c.; Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2019, p.c.; Maciej Wyżgoł 2020, p.c. Wyżgoł worked as an ethno-archaeologist in Jawgul, a Mahas village.

⁷⁶³ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Faḡīri Muḥammad, Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

⁷⁶⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 120; and 2016: proverb 118); co-investigated with the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd, Kamal Hussein, Taha A. Taha.

⇒ Due to his desperate situation he digs at the place (*agar*) where farmers grind their crops, looking for any remaining seeds.

A6.3 ⁷⁶⁵ *ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓ ΤΕΒΙΝΝ ΑΓΑΡΚΕΔ ΣΙΛΛΙ!*

turug teebinn agarked silli!

turug teeb-in=n agar=ged silli-Ø

[wind be-3SG]=GEN place=INS winnow-IMP:SG

Winnow at the place where the wind is!

⇒ Don't be apart from the community!

⇒ Instead of disagreeing, you should adapt to the community's opinion.

⇒ When getting a chance, take it!

variant *enn turugki elkin, silled!*

If you find your wind, complete winnowing!

variant *turug ter taanagaked, silli!*

The wind, from whatever direction it comes, winnow!

English: He trims his sails to the wind. – He jumps on bandwagons. – He floats with the tide.

Whereas A6.2 can be interpreted both ways (positive and negative) A6.3 clearly teaches opportunism.

A6.4 ⁷⁶⁶ *ΖΑΚΕΔΤΙ ΔΕΓΙΝ.*

hasedti deegin.

hased=gi deeg-in

stumps.of.crop=ACC irrigate-3SG

He irrigates the stumps of crops (after harvest).

⁷⁶⁵ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, 'Ammār Ya'qūb; variants from AḤMAD SĀTI and al-Amīn Muḥammad.

⁷⁶⁶ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltod, Kamal Hussein. In Urbi it is *hasedki* as there is no allomorph =*ti* for the ACC clitic.

⇒ He does something useless.

A6.5 ⁷⁶⁷ *INN IᵛΔΡΙ ᵛĀNΔIN, IPINΔIGI TΔΓIPPOY.*

inn ishari waandin, irindigi tagirru.

inn ishari waandi-n ...

2PL:POSS place.leavened.flour appear-3SG

iri-ndi=gi tagir-r-u

people-POSS=ACC cover-NEUT-2PL

Your (PL) place of leavened flour appears, you (PL) cover what belongs to [other] people.

ishari is the place where the leavened flour is put.

⇒ You should marry one of your relatives.

A6.6 ⁷⁶⁸ *NŌPTI BŌŪN, TOYPOYΓ ΔŌŪN KOYΛΟΥΓI INΔΕΔ
ΦΙΡΡΙΝΓΟΝ.*

noorti buun, turug juun kulugi inded firringon.

noorti buu-n turug juu=n kulu=gi ...

flour lie-3SG wind mill=GEN stone=ACC

indi-ed firri-n=gon

pick.up-PFV fly-3SG=CO

There is flour, the wind has picked up the millstone and [it] flies [away].

⇒ Strange things happen.

⁷⁶⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 114; and 2016: proverb 112); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein. The proverb has the same meaning as A22.26.

⁷⁶⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 118; and 2016: proverb 116); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. Ḥāmid Khabīr writes the compound noun *juun kulu* as two words. Other Nubians, as Kamal Hussein, write compound nouns as one word, here *juunkulu*. As standardisation of the Nubian orthography is an ongoing process, for the time being, in this matter I adhere to Ḥāmid Khabīr's orthography. – The proverb has the same meaning as A5.16 and M10.1.

A6.7 ⁷⁶⁹ *ΕΡ ΓΟΥCΣΑΡ ΜΑΩΕΓΙ ΓΑΡΚΟΜΟΥΝ.*
er gussar mashegi gaarkomun.
er gussa=r mashe=gi gaar-ko-mun
 2SG grain.store=LOC small.plate=ACC mill-PRT1-NEG
 You did not mill the [amount of a] small plate in the grain store.

⇒ You have been lazy in spite of lots of work waiting to be done.
 Here, proverb A24.2 could be added.

A6.8 ⁷⁷⁰ *ΔΟΥΝ ΤΟΔΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΝ ΑΤΤΙΡ ΒΟΥΝ.*
juun toodton juun attir buun.
juu=n tood=gon juu=n attir buu-n
 millstone=GEN son=CO millstone=GEN near lie-3SG
 And the small millstone lies next to the [big] millstone.

⇒ Look careful, everything is here.

A6.9 ⁷⁷¹ *ΔΟΓΕΛ ΑΓΙΝ, ΔΟΥΚΚΕΛΓΙ ΕΔΚΟΡΑΝ.*
joogel aagin, dukkelgi edkoran.
joog-el aag-in dukki-el=gi ed-kor-an
 grind-PTC:PF stay-3SG bake-PTC:PF=ACC marry-PRT1-3PL
 She who grounded [the flour], remained [unmarried];
 they married the one who baked [the bread from the flour].

⁷⁶⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 58); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

⁷⁷⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 151); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Hasan. Ḥāmid Khabīr alternates between assimilating *t* and *k* as in *toodkon*, and not. To be consistent I do not change the last consonant of a root.

⁷⁷¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 39; and 2016: proverb 40); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 162.

dukki usually means ‘to pull out’ or ‘to start’. Here it has a different meaning: ‘to bake [bread]’.⁷⁷²

⇒ Others benefit from your work without helping you.

M6.1 ⁷⁷³ *ΟΛΓΟΝ ΜΑΡΕΡ ΤΟΝ ΜΑΨΕΩΕΡΚΙ ΔΟΡΚΟΜΝΟΥ.*

olgon mareer toon maasheweerki joorkoomnu.

olgon maree=ro toon maashe=weer=gi ...
not.yet millet=LOC from small.plate=INDF=ACC

joor-koo-munu

harvest-PRT1-NEG

He did not yet harvest [even] the [amount of a] small plate of millet.

⇒ He still has a long way to go.

M6.2 ⁷⁷⁴ *ΖΕΩΑΓΙ ΔΟΡΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΔΑΔΙ.*

hewaagi joorin goon, daajii.

hewaa=gi joor-in goon daajii-Ø
air=ACC harvest-3SG SUB roam-3SG

While he harvests the air, he roams aimlessly.

⇒ He does something that cannot succeed.

⇒ He behaves like Don Quixote.

M6.3 ⁷⁷⁵ *ΝΟΡΤΙΝΑΩΡΕ ΝΟΡΟΚΟΥ.*

noortinawre noorosu.

noorti=nawre nooro-s-u
flour=SIM fine-PRT2-3SG

⁷⁷² In both Nubian dictionaries, ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965], and MASSENBACH 1933, that meaning is missing.

⁷⁷³ From Samīr Ramaḍān, Debood.

⁷⁷⁴ From Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

⁷⁷⁵ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

He has [ground it] fine similar to flour.

⇒ He punished me severely.

⇒ He solved the trouble between two people.

M6.4 ⁷⁷⁶ *αωῖν δὲ γ βὀυλι ἀωροϋ.*

awiin joog buulgi aawru.

awiin **joog** *buu-il=gi* ...

food.for.journey grind STAT-PTC:IPF=ACC

aaw-r-u

make-NEUT-2PL

You (POL:PL) make the food for the journey grinded.

⇒ You still have a long way to go.

⇒ Even if there seems to be nothing there is a little bit left.

⇒ He is on a long journey, even the food crumbles into pieces.

4.7. Agriculture: Date Palm

The date palm and its fruit, the date, (both: *benti/betti*) have been a source of high nutritional value and food security since antiquity, enabling a wide-range of skills and practices, culminating in entering the UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2019.⁷⁷⁷ The date palm is known for its longevity, and for providing shadow, so much cherished in these sun-dried countries.

In Nubia the palm tree was of the domesticated kind. There are two kinds of date palms. Only the female grows dates. The male is used to pollinate the female one. The process can be carried out manually by carrying a seed to the female tree. A date palm usually belongs to several owners, each of whom

⁷⁷⁶ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli, Sha‘bān Berber, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad. Nowadays, *awiin* is relatively unknown.

⁷⁷⁷ For more detailed information about the date palm tree and its cultivation in Nubia, see RYAN and JAEGER et al 2021, and ich.unesco.org/en/RL/date-palm-knowledge-skills-traditions-and-practices-01509 [last accessed on 24 August 2022].

has a certain share, and is therefore one of the pillars of the complicated social network that unites Nubians within one village.⁷⁷⁸

The *xaraaj* (Arabic *kharāj*) was a tax during the Islamic period⁷⁷⁹ imposed on agricultural land and on date palms, collected by the deputy headman (*samil*, Ar.: *sheikh al-balad*). At first it was payable by non-Muslims only. Later, when land changed hands from non-Muslims to Muslims or non-Muslims became Muslims payment continued. In the early 19th century “[t]he governors also take from every date tree two clusters of fruit.”⁷⁸⁰ At the beginning of Nimeiri’s presidency it was S£0.11 per tree with the average tree producing S£70-80. In 1984 this tax was raised to S£1.00.⁷⁸¹ The tax had to be paid in any case, there “was no built-in mechanism to compensate the taxpayer for a poor yield”.⁷⁸² Such taxes were one reason for Nubians needing cash. If possible paying taxes was avoided and Nubian villagers hid when the *samil* arrived.⁷⁸³

Travelling along the river Nile prior to the heightening of the Aswan Dam in 1933 one saw date palms on both sides:

The elderly generation of [the Fadijja village] Ed Derr liked to elaborate about the former wealth of dates. Everyone was allowed to satisfy his need at will. The surplus of the harvest was carried to Egypt in large shipments, where the Nubian dates due to their excellent quality found the best markets and at the same time constituted a rich source of income for the Nubians.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁸ Aḥmad Sulaymān 2003, p.c.; Thourya Muḥammad 2017, p.c.

⁷⁷⁹ I define the Islamic period as the time after the medieval Nubian Christian kingdoms and before Nubia became administrated by British colonials.

⁷⁸⁰ BURCKHARDT 1819: 137.

⁷⁸¹ FEGLEY 2011: 144.

⁷⁸² COOPER 1976: 365.

⁷⁸³ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

⁷⁸⁴ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 1979: 30-31; in the German original: “Auch die bejahrte Generation von Ed Derr berichtete gerne und ausführlich von dem seinerzeitigen Dattelreichtum. Jeder durfte nach Belieben seinen Bedarf decken. Der Überschuss der Ernte wurde in grossen Schiffsladungen nach Ägypten gebracht, wo die nubischen Dattelsorten wegen ihrer vorzüglichen Qualität den besten Absatz fanden

Looking back at the time before the *hijra* Ahmed Dahab remembers wistfully:

Growing date palm trees gave the natives a great experience in attending [to] their growth, taking care of them, impregnating [pollinating] them, harvesting them, storing them and using environment material, with no chemical pesticides. After harvesting the ripe crop, it is spread out on the roofs, to expose it to the sun, for about a month, stirring it from time to time, to help dry and to prevent liquorice. ... the date palm trees were the cause of [the Nubian] settlement within each sub territory along the region. It was a strong motive that checked many people from migration. They look at the palm trees as a part of the legacy their fathers left back [behind], and that must be retained and taken care of. ... the season of the dates [sic!] harvest is the best season to have wedding parties. ... As the dates had been the primary means of living for the Nubians, the palm trees had, also, been the only means to prepare their living place.⁷⁸⁵

In the Dongola Reach sixty years ago the date palm was valued as much as in Lower Nubia: “The Dongolawi prefer to grow nothing except date palms.”⁷⁸⁶ The date palm is still regarded as a source for long life.⁷⁸⁷ The multi-purpose date palm is the symbol of the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’. A poem by the Andaandi poet Jalāl ‘Umar Merowaarti performed by Manāl ‘Abd al-Rassūl, the former lead-singer of the Dongola Association, in the first decade of the 21st century at many celebrations in Nubia and beyond, praises it. Each time the audience was jubilant.⁷⁸⁸

und zugleich für die Nubier eine ergiebige Einnahmequelle darstellten.” – Among Sudanese Nubians before the advent of modern communication and pre-*hijra* Mattokki Nubians dates were nearly the only cash crop. (ENDERLIN 1919a: 2)

⁷⁸⁵ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 33-35.

⁷⁸⁶ MASSENBACH 1962: 134; in the German original: “Die Dongolaner lieben nichts, außer dem Anpflanzen von Dattelpalmen.”

⁷⁸⁷ E.g. Fu’ād ‘Akūd (2016, p.c.) whose grandmother died at the age of more than 100 years. Also one grandson (2002, p.c.) told me that his Andaandi grandmother’s old age was a result of eating lots of dates.

⁷⁸⁸ The song is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr9LXYNBSyU [last accessed on 22 August 2022]. I attended such celebrations in different places. Since the lead singer Manāl ‘Abd al-Rassūl became married she no longer performs.

Each part of the palm tree had its specific usage.⁷⁸⁹ Thirty-five years later the anthropologist Fernea writes:

Date products were used for innumerable things: Fronds were cut down and burned for fuel, the branches were cut into strips for building the walls and roofs of animal shelters; smaller strips were used to weave baskets and mats; women scoured pots and pans with balls of palm fiber, and [my husband] Bob had even reported seeing woven palm frond bandages on man's leg. ... [Nubians] were thinking that the task of raising palm trees is similar as bringing up children.⁷⁹⁰

And similarly the above mentioned Mattokki Nubian:

They [the Nubians] used the trunks and stalks of the palms in making house roofs, beds and mats on which they sit and worship. It also becomes a part of the gear [outfit] of the bride.⁷⁹¹

Another Mattokki remembers that the trunks of the date palm were used as roof beams (*mirig*) in house building.⁷⁹² Also the colourful palm fibre lid (*ada/tagaddi*) and children's games⁷⁹³ were made from it.

⁷⁸⁹ SCHÄFER 1917: 94-96 and SCHÄFER 1935: 290-298. Both texts are available in Mattokki and in German.

⁷⁹⁰ FERNEA 1970: 196. Although her book was published post-*hijra*, she writes about her observations shortly before the *hijra*.

⁷⁹¹ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 35.

⁷⁹² Aḥmad 'Uthmān 2016, p.c. Cf. semantic domain 22 'House and Household'.

⁷⁹³ Among the games that made use of the palm tree and the dates were:

babaluja was played during the day, with sticks and a stone of the doum palm. The stone of the doum palm gave the game its name. It resembles hockey. The date stone is beaten far away with the stick. It was dangerous, as one could hurt another player easily. (Aḥmad Hamza 2019+2020, p.c.)

taab: One by one, they [the Nubian children] threw four split pieces of palm rib up into the air. Whoever dropped all four with the green or white side up was given a stick with which he hit everyone with two green and two white ones twice on the soles of their feet until he was replaced by the next four-thrower. Of course, there was always singing. (GERTZEN 2014: 200; in the German original: "Einer nach dem anderen warf vier gespaltene Stücke Palmrippe einmal in die Höhe. Bei wem nun alle vier mit der grünen oder der weißen Seite nach oben fielen, bekam einen Stock, mit dem er jeden, bei dem zwei grüne und zwei weiße dalagen, zweimal auf die

Ropes (*iri*) were made from palm branches (*hawirte/awirte*). Freshly picked it was kept in water so that it stayed moist and pliable. When trying to knot a dry branch (i.e. not fresh anymore) it breaks, a wonderful comparison to discipline that still can change a child for the better, yet not an adult.⁷⁹⁴

In Urbi I visited an elderly man in 2005 who still lived in the old part of the village that most other villagers had already left. In his home nearly everything was produced from natural materials, mainly from the date palm. His house can be called ‘ecologically sustainable’. In the words of one Fadijja: “Everything was made of palm trees. Plates were made of dried palm tree leaves which were woven and coloured.”⁷⁹⁵ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it was forbidden to cut down a date palm. Instead, people waited until it fell.⁷⁹⁶

While most parts of the date palm have a positive connotation, the thorns (*kinisse*) on the trunk are an exception. As during harvest time the picker climbing up the date palm cannot avoid them, he makes sure not to be hurt. Also, thorns fall down and are spread on the ground making walking difficult. Similarly, life is full of thorns and emotional pains.

Among contemporary inhabitants of the Dongola Reach some farmers worry about the future of their date palms. Despite the advantages of the Merowe High Dam, such as generating electricity, it seems to cause a change in climate, more heat and more rain, resulting in an environment less suitable for growing date palms.⁷⁹⁷ In the Mahas region, contemporary “farmers mentioned that they now invest less time in looking after their trees.”⁷⁹⁸ Instead, broad beans are increasingly cultivated.

Fußsohlen schlug, bis er von dem nächsten Vierwerfer abgelöst wurde. Dabei wurde natürlich immerfort gesungen.”)

⁷⁹⁴ The full process of making a rope is explained in semantic domain 22 ‘House and Household’.

⁷⁹⁵ The Fadijja Am Samal (p.c.) in YASSER OSMAN 1990: 128.

⁷⁹⁶ Ahmad ‘Ali 2019, p.c. He employed the Arabic term *ḥarām* that is also used in Islamic law describing prohibitions and stronger than English ‘forbidden’.

⁷⁹⁷ Farmers in the Dongola Reach 2010, p.c.

⁷⁹⁸ RYAN and JAEGER et al 2021: 31.

Among the Mattokki, most of the date palms were lost with the construction of the Aswan Dam and its subsequent heightening in 1912 and 1933: "[Behind] Korosko ... one saw more and more palm trees protrude out of the water, ..."⁷⁹⁹

Finally, even what little remained was destroyed with the erection of the Aswan High Dam: "The raisings of the dam had spelled the end of the extensive palm groves."⁸⁰⁰ Nowadays in Egyptian Nubia, the "Sugar cane has replaced date palms as the main economic crop."⁸⁰¹

Surprisingly, the 'International Museum of Nubia' in Aswan excludes the date palm and its importance for Nubian society and culture nearly completely:

[I]n the Nubian Museum ... the "purely public" Nubia is exhibited, a cultural heritage in artifacts, ... I learn little about the modest life of the Nubians on the narrow bank of the Nile, for example about their most precious possession, the date palms.⁸⁰²

So far, I have identified the names of twenty-one different kinds of dates known in Andaandi and eleven different kinds of dates in Mattokki. The lower number among the latter may be due to the *hijra*. Each kind of date had its specific season:

One kind [of date] was eaten only when it was green, while another kind was a very sweet date, and still another had to be completely ripe. There were many different kinds that ripened all through the year.⁸⁰³

⁷⁹⁹ MASSENBACH 1952: 16; in the German original: "[Nach] Korosko ... sah man immer mehr Palmen aus dem Wasser herausragen, ..." – More quotes from the date palms' submersion at the beginning of the 20th century are to be found in semantic domain 1 'River'.

⁸⁰⁰ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 2010: 200.

⁸⁰¹ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 216.

⁸⁰² HEIMLICH 2006: 119; in the German original: "[I]m nubischen Museum ... ist das „rein öffentliche“ Nubien ausgestellt, ein Kulturerbe in Artefakten, ... Über das bescheidene Leben der Nubier auf dem schmalen Ufersaum des Nil erfahre ich wenig, etwa über ihr kostbarstes Gut, die Dattelpalmen." – When visiting the Nubian Museum in Aswan myself, I had the same experience.

⁸⁰³ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

Dates were an integral part of the daily diet: “The village people only needed to eat one meal a day while there were lots of dates to nibble on.”⁸⁰⁴ Dates with fresh milk provided the first snack in the morning (*agilgi kus*). In times of food shortages and when travelling, dates could be the only food available.⁸⁰⁵

Each kind of date is kept in its own clay storage container (*gussa/gussee*). New dates are put in on the top. At the bottom they are taken out. Among the Mattokki the containers were built permanently into the house. Therefore, at the *hijra* they could not be taken along.⁸⁰⁶

Alternatively dates were kept in cowhides. When slaughtering an animal, a butcher recognised which cowhide was suitable for storage. A cobbler prepared and tanned the hides to render them serviceable for preserving. These days, dates are kept in durable sacks. If sun-dried the best ones keep for up to two years.⁸⁰⁷

Similar to the date palm is the tall doum palm (*hambu/ambu*).⁸⁰⁸ Its height easily reaches 15 metres and more. The fruit of the doum palm is harvested by stone and slingshot.⁸⁰⁹ As only its top is bushy it offers shade far away from the root. So someone sitting in the shade of a doum palm is far away from its root. The *gussa/gussee* storage container of the doum palm is especially huge as its fruit is large, in contrast to the *gussa/gussee* of the sesame. Hence, one doum palm container can store the same amount as several containers of smaller fruits or crops.

The doum palm, being a metaphor for the one providing help far away or to a non-relative, does not necessarily carry negative connotations. Some

⁸⁰⁴ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994. Farmers in the Sukkot region remember similarly (RYAN and JAEGER 2021: 32). – For *agilgi kus*, cf. proverb A19.22.

⁸⁰⁵ ENDERLIN 1919a: 2 and ENDERLIN 1919b: 12 when travelling by camel to Dongola.

⁸⁰⁶ Mekki Muhammad 2019, p.c.

⁸⁰⁷ al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl 2010, p.c.

⁸⁰⁸ In the southern Mattokki villages of Allaagi and Seyaale *ambu* denotes the fruit of the doum palm, *umbu* denotes the trunk of the same.

⁸⁰⁹ Men from Khannaag in Khartoum 2015, p.c.

Nubians with sufficient life-experience have been able to reconcile warring Nubians as an *ejjuwaad* and solve their problems.⁸¹⁰

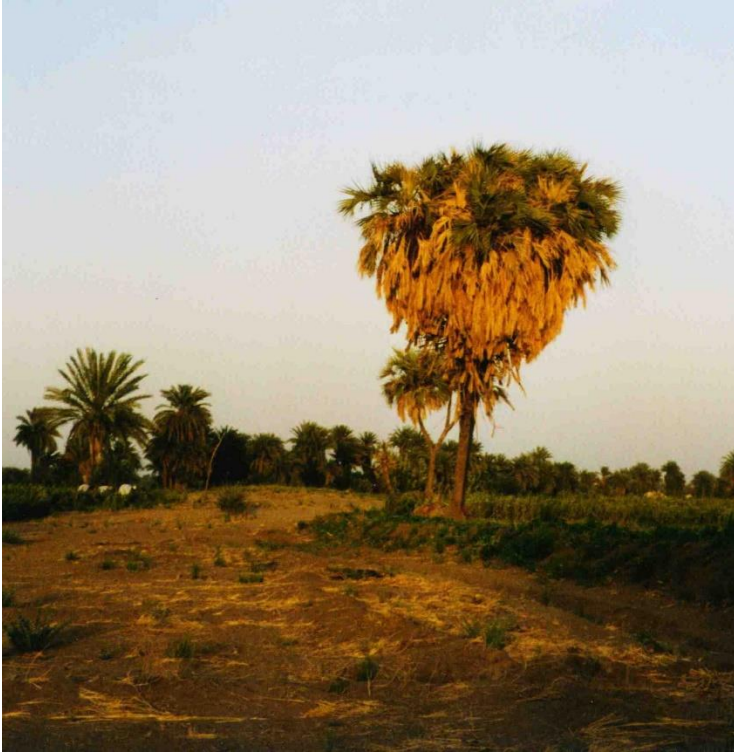


Figure 4: Doum palm (*hambu/ambu*) near Kultoos

A7.1 ⁸¹¹ *BENTIGON, BERIGED BŌYN GŌN, TENN XAPĀSKI KOBIN.*

bentigon, beriged buun goon, tenn xaraajki kobin.

benti=gon *beri*=ged *buu-n* *goon* ...

date=CO side=INS lie-3SG SUB

tenn *xaraaj*=gi *kob-in*

3SG:POSS tax=ACC pay-3SG

⁸¹⁰ Cf. semantic domain 34 ‘Andaandi Words used by Wise Men’ for more insight.

⁸¹¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 77; and 2016: proverb 76); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

Even the date palm, although resting on its side, pays its taxes.

beriged buun Even a date palm that has fallen over, and is mainly buried in the sand, may grow dates.⁸¹²

kob usually means ‘to lock’; here ‘to pay’.

⇒ Complaint about a government whose taxes are too high.

⇒ Even if others mistype the script, the author has to accept the responsibility for it.

A7.2⁸¹³ *BENTI BŌPKIN, TIMBECIP TAṢKIN.*

benti boorkin, timbesir tarkin.

benti boor-ki-n ...

date collapse-COND-3SG

tim-bes=ir *tarki-n*

3SG:POSS-brother=LOC lean.against-3SG

When the date palm collapses, it leans against its brother.

boor A fallen date palm still bears fruit, as A7.1 states.

⇒ When someone is in need or no longer has any money, he asks his brother or any other close relative for help.

English: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

A7.3⁸¹⁴ *BENTI NOCŌ ANKIN, ERTE WĒN ĞĒPKI COKKEMOYN.*

benti nosoo ankin, erte ween geerki sokkemun.

benti nosoo an-ki-n ...

date tall INCH-COND-3SG

erte *weer=n geer=gi* *sokker-mun*

ovary.of.date.palm one=GEN except=ACC carry-NEG

⁸¹² MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

⁸¹³ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 121; and 2016: proverb 119); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān.

⁸¹⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

When the date palm becomes tall, it does not carry except for one ovary [there are only a few fruits].

⇒ He has become old and is not able to do a lot anymore.

A7.4 ⁸¹⁵ *ANN BILΛEP Ḅ̄WIN, TENN BENTIP ELIN.*

ann biller aawin, tenn bentir elin.

ann *bille=r* *aaw-in* *tenn* *benti=r el-in*
 1SG:POSS onion=LOC make-2SG 3SG:POSS date=LOCfind-2SG
 [As] you make in my onion, you find in his date.

bille The onion is considered tiny, having a bad smell. It has a negative connotation, unlike the date (*benti*).

⇒ If you have to go through a difficult phase in life, there will be a good outcome.

⇒ You will treat something more valuable the same way as you treat something of lesser value.

⇒ If you did something bad, return to the truth.

A7.5 ⁸¹⁶ *ΖΑΩΙΡΤΕΓΙ ΔΑΩΩΟΥΡ ΕΝ ΜΟΥΡΤΙΓΙΡΑΝ.*

hawirtegi jawwur en murtigiran.

hawirte=gi *jawwur e-n* *murti-gir-an*
 palm.branch=ACC moist be-3SG knot-CAUS-3PL

They cause the palm branch, [still] being damp, to [be] knotted.

⇒ Teaching children is more beneficial than elderly people.

⇒ He does something at the right time, especially educating and disciplining a child.

⁸¹⁵ From Abāthūr ‘Abdullahi, Agade; co-investigated with Fu’ād ‘Akūd, mother of Rodwan Uthmān.

⁸¹⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 104; and 2016: proverb 100); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. El-Shafie El-Guzuuli replaces *murti* by *dig* denoting ‘to tie’. TAHA 2011, ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 4, and Muḥammad Ṣālīḥ replace *hawirte* by *korse* denoting the frond of a palm branch. The middle one provides a slightly different spelling. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 530 and ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 501.

⇒ Teach, train, and enforce good moral conduct in grandchildren while they are still young and flexible.

MSA: . اطرق الحديد وهو ساخن. – “Strike the iron while it is hot.”

SCA: . السعف بكربو وكت لين. – “The palm leave is braided while it is wet.”

English: You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.

A7.6 ⁸¹⁷ *ΖΑΩΙΡΤΕ ΚΩΩΙΚΙΝ, ΔΙΓΜΟΥΝ.*

hawirte sowwikin, digmun.

hawirte sowwi-ki-n dig-mun

palm.branch get.dry-COND-3SG get.tied-NEG

When the palm branch gets dry, it cannot be tied.

⇒ Let things take their course. If you change them in the end they will no longer be useful.

⇒ He tries to do something when it is already too late.

⇒ Form children and leave adults as they are.

⇒ Change your behaviour now before you are getting too old to change.

variant *hawirte sowwed murtuged kattimun.*

The dried palm branch does not tie a knot.

The proverb is frequently said to children.

A7.7 ⁸¹⁸ *ΖΑΜΒΟΥΝ ΓΟΥΥΣΣΑ ΣΙΜΣΙΜΝ ΕΡΔΕΒ ΟΩΩΙΓΙ ΚΟΚΚΕΝ.*

hambun gussa simsimn erdeb owwigi sokken.

⁸¹⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod; variant from al-Sādiq ‘Abd al-Rahmān.

⁸¹⁸ From HĀMID KHABİR (2007 and 2016: proverb 64); co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltod. El-Shafie El-Guzuuli replaces *owwigi* by *weerki* glossed as ‘one=ACC’.

hambu=*n* *gussa* ...
 doum.palm=GEN store
simsim=*n* *erdeb* *owwi*=*gi* *sokker*-*n*
 sesame=GEN 198.litres two=ACC carry-3SG

The storage container of the doum palm [fruit] holds twice 198 litres of sesame.

- ⇒ Warning to a child who nibbles a lot of things (e.g. sweets) before the main course. The unfinished remains of the meal will be dished up next time.

A7.8 ⁸¹⁹ *ḠAMBOY WAḠPPIḠI OLLIKIPIN.*

hambu warrigi ollikirin.

hambu *warri*=*gi* *olli-gir-in*
 doum.palm distant=ACC shade-CAUS-3SG

The doum palm causes shade in the distance.

olli In Sudanese Arabic ‘shade’ connotes family loyalty.⁸²⁰

- ⇒ He marries somebody unrelated.
 ⇒ He does not support his own relatives (who should get priority in caring) in spite of helping others who are in need.
 ⇒ He rather spends his talents and money on others than family members and relatives.⁸²¹
 ⇒ His positive influence is felt far away.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 127; and 2016: proverb 125); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood, Kamal Hussein. El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Muḥammad Sharīf and Idrīs Aḥmad replace *olli* by the synonym *nuur*. During the digital NubiaFest in 2020, Elyas Khalil mentioned the Halfawi variant. The SCA and ECA idioms are taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 540.

⁸²⁰ As in SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 152.

⁸²¹ From TAHA 2011 and MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 1.

⁸²² This additional interpretation agrees with the Tangale metaphor ‘shadow’: Somebody with a long shadow “is a person who enjoys popularity”. (JUNGRAITHMAYR 2006: XXI) Tangale is a language from Northern Nigeria.

SCA: ضل الدليب البيجدع بعيد.
 “The shadow of the doleib palm that casts far.”

ECA: شجرة مرة تطرح برا.
 “A bitter tree that yields its fruits outside (the house).”

English: Charity begins at home.

There are a number of proverbs warning against marrying outside of one’s kinship group. It “is considered disastrous by the community at large because of the very real threat of assimilation with the Arab majority that it brings.”⁸²³

A7.9 ⁸²⁴ ΖΑΜΒΟΥ ΤΕΝΝ ΤΟΓΟΓΙ ΟΛΛΙΚΙΡΜΟΥΝ.

hambu tenn togoo gi ollikirmun.

hambu tenn togoo=gi olli-gir-mun

doum.palm 3SG:POSS lower=ACC shade-CAUS-NEG

The doum palm does not give shade to [its] the lower [part].

⇒ He does not care about his relatives yet helps others.

A7.10 ⁸²⁵ ΟΥΡΚΕΚΟΛΝΑΡ ΔΟΥΡΑΝΓΙ, ΤΕ ΦΑΩΙΡ ΔΟΥΝ?

ursekoolnar juurangi, te faawir juun?

urse-kool=nar juur-ran=gi ...

[root-ADJR=AD go-INF]=ADV

te faawir juur-n

Q:PRED without.root go-2SG

While going with someone having a root [is possible],
 are you going [with someone] without a root?

⁸²³ GILMORE 2016: 124.

⁸²⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 1.

⁸²⁵ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 122; and 2016: proverb 120); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. *faawir* is rarely used, missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965], and its pronunciation varies, alternatively *faawur*.

te is an interrogative particle. ARMBRUSTER’s (1960: §5850) statement that “-*te* ...? is commonly attached to an adverb” cannot be confirmed in this collection of proverbs. *te* usually occurs after a sentence initial phrase or clause. It is not a suffix. Instead, *te* could be called a ‘second-position clitic’.⁸²⁶

⇒ When marrying consider the origin of the bride’s family. A family that has a positive reputation is to be preferred.

A7.11 ⁸²⁷ *ΚΟΥΛΜΑΝ ΚΟΒΒΙΚΟΛΓΙ ΔΑΡΙΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΚΙΝΙΣΣΕΓΙ ΖΕΜΕΛΕΝ ΤΑΝΝΑΝ.*

kulman koccikoolgi jaril, tenn kinissegi hemeleen tannan.

kulma=*n* *koccikool*=*gi jar-il ...*

kind.of.date=GEN tip.of.date=ACC pick-PTC:IPF

tenn kinisse=*gi hemelee-n tannan*

3SG:POSSthorn=ACC endure.LV-3SG COP

The one who picks the tip of the [ripening] *kulma* date has to endure the thorn.

kulma is a famous and sweet date yet its tip is sharp and can hurt. The proverb works exclusively with this variety of date.

koccikool describes a date right at the beginning of ripeness. It is reddish at the top and has a little bit of yellow in the middle.

tannan has different functions. Here it is a copula with additional deontic modality.⁸²⁸

⇒ If someone wants to reach something wonderful he has to expect challenges on the way.

When a Dongolawi Nubian is in deep love and describes the sufferings and troubles he is facing, another friend may say the proverb to him.

English: You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs. – No pain, no gain.

⁸²⁶ HASPELMATH 2022: 13.

⁸²⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⁸²⁸ KAMAL HUSSEIN and JAEGER 2022: 103+104.

A7.12 ⁸²⁹ *KINICCE CaΓaPPO Δā BŌYλ.*

kinisse sagarro daa buul.

kinisse sagar=ro daa buu-il

thorn satchel=LOC be.present STAT-PTC:IPF

[He is like] The thorn that is in the satchel.

sagar is a satchel around the waist to put things (as dates) in.

⇒ He is deeply hurt.

The proverb is said about someone who trusted someone else and shared everything with him. However, the trust was abused and animosity developed.

A7.13 ⁸³⁰ *IN Ta, ZaPīPKI KINICCEP TŌN BĒWIPAN TANNAN.*

in ta, hariirki kinisser toon beewiran tannan.

*in ta hariir=gi kinisse=r toon beew-r-an
tannan*

DEM silk=ACC thorn=LOC from release-NEUT-3PL COP

What we have come to is this: They release the silk from the thorn.

⇒ After having a fight they are in the process of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a lengthy process needing perseverance and patience in order to be successful. Among Nubians frequently an *ejjuwaad* is involved.

M7.1 ⁸³¹ *AMBŌYN ΔŌWŌI TENNA TOΓŌP āGILGI, NŌYNIΓ ā
EΛMOYNOY.*

ambun jowwi tenna togoor aagilgi, nuunig aa elmunu.

⁸²⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 28); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Kamal Hussein. A variant of *sagar* is *sagar*.

⁸³⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 155); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza. The concept of the *ejjuwaad* is discussed in more detail in semantic domain 34 ‘Andaandi Words used by Wise Men’.

⁸³¹ From St61; variants from Muḥarram Maḥmūd and ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

ambu=na jowwi tenna togoor ...
 [doum.palm=GEN tree 3SG:POSS under
aag-il=gi nuuni=gi aag el-munu
 stay-PTC:IPF]=ACC shade=ACC PROG find-NEG

The one who stays under his doum palm tree, he does not find shade.

St. transl.: The doum palm does not shade what is below it.

⇒ He cares more about unrelated people than about his own family.

variant *umbu tenna togoog aa nuunigirminu.*

The doum palm does not cause shade to its lower part.

variant *ambun jowwi togoor teegilgi, nuunig aa elmun.*

The one who sits under the doum palm tree does not find shade.

The meaning of the proverb is balanced by the need for hospitality where more effort is exerted to serve tea to a guest than to one's own family.

M7.2 ⁸³² *AMBŌY NAWITTE WAPPIP NŌYNIĠ ĀĠ ĀWI.*

ambu nawitte warrir nuunig aag aawi.

ambu nawitte warri=ro nuuni=gi ...
 doum.palm SIM far=LOC shade=ACC
aag aaw-i

PROG make-3SG

Like the doum palm he makes shade in the distance.

⇒ He wants to marry outside of his relatives.

M7.3 ⁸³³ *AMBŌY COWWIDIP ĠAMBŌYĠ Ā OYNΔOYPPA.*

ambu sowwidir gambug aa undurra.

⁸³² From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm. He replaces the simulative *nawitte* with its variant *nawikke*.

⁸³³ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe.

ambu *sowwi-ed=ir* *gambu=gi* ...
 doum.palm get.dry-PFV=LOC axe=ACC
aag undur-r-a
 PROG insert-NEUT-3PL

They hammer the axe in the completely dry doum palm.

sowwid (var. *sowwed*) is a metaphor for somebody who lacks understanding, also one who is greedy/stingy, cf. A19.32.

⇒ The government hits the one who does not want to listen.

M7.4 ⁸³⁴ ΖΩΛΝΑΪ ΒΑΞΑΔ ΔΑΚΙ, ΚΟΥΛΟΥΡ ΒΕΤΤΙ ΙΑ ΒΙΝΕ.

zoolnay baxad daaki, kulur betti yaa biinee.

zool=nay *baxad* *daa-ki* ...
 person=AD luck be.present-COND
kulu=ro ***betti*** *aag* *biinee-Ø*
 stone=LOC date PROG appear.LV-3SG

When there is luck by a person, in the stone a date appears.

⇒ He is lucky.

M7.5 ⁸³⁵ ΑΩΜΑΝΝ ΙΓΜΑ.

ashmaan iigma.

ashmaan=*na* *iig-ma*
 date.palm.fiber=GEN fire-COP

It is [like] a fire of date palm fibre.

ashmaan As quickly as the fire from date palm fibre lights up and becomes strong, it dies down.

⇒ It is a flash in the pan, just a passing fancy.

⇒ He is getting angry easily, but also quickly appeased.

⁸³⁴ From Faḍl Aḥmad, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with ‘Āisha ‘Abd al-Rāziq. The proverb is part of lyrics written by the Mattokki poet Sha‘bān ‘Awād.

⁸³⁵ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. Goo-Grauer.

M7.6 ⁸³⁶ *ΕΡΓΟΝ ΚΙΝΙΣΣΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΣΑΡΚΙΚΕΔ, ΒΕΤΤΙΓ ἄ ΚΑΛΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

ergon kinisser toon sarkiked, bettig aa kalmunu.

er=gon kinisse=ro toon sarki=ged ...

[2SG=CO thorn=LOC from fear]=CAUS

betti=gi aag kal-munu

date=ACC PROG eat-NEG

As you fear [to be hurt] by the thorn, you do not eat the date.

St. transl.: Who is afraid of the thorn does not harvest the date.

⇒ Never be afraid of any difficulty!

⇒ You want to obtain something; but are afraid of the means.

M7.7 ⁸³⁷ *ΚΙΝΙΣΣΕ ΟΣΣΙΡ ἄ ΤΩΜΝΟΥ, ΕΡΤΟΝ ΩΔΙΕΔ ἄΓΙ.*

kinisse ossir aa toomnu, erton wayed aagi.

kinisse ossi=ro toor-munu ...

thorn leg=LOC enter-NEG

er-ton waye-ed aag-i

2SG=CO be.careful-PFV PROG-2SG

The thorn does not enter into the leg, [if] you continue to be careful.

St. transl.: The thorn does not cause loss when looking at the position of the leg.

⇒ Watch your steps.

⁸³⁶ From St36; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Khālid Karār. Asmaa A. Kenawy replaces the first subordinate clause by *etton kinisser toon sarkiki* ‘However, if you fear the thorn’ and the NEG.sf *munu* by *minu*. Aḥmad ‘Uthmān replaces the verb *sarkiked* by *aa sarki buu*. ‘Umar Ḥasan Shilluk replaces the first subordinate clause by *kinisser toon sarkil* ‘He who fears the thorn’. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 42. The last interpretation is partly from there. – I gloss =*ged* different from MASSENBACH (1933: 135), as discussed in section 3.10.4.

⁸³⁷ From St35; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Khālid Karār. Thābit Zāki emphasises the conditional character of the proverb replacing *aagi* by *aagkin* ‘if you were’.

4.8. Other Plants

Besides the date palm, in Nubia only a limited number of trees grow and offer shade, even in the Dongola Reach where the valley becomes wider. Lower Nubia before the construction of the Aswan Dam is described as follows:

The Valley of Treasures had not only palm trees, but also far larger and very useful trees: different kinds of acacias and sycamores. In the delightful, dense and lasting shade of these mighty, strong trees, whole flocks of quadrupeds, countless tame and wild birds, and shadows of native men, women and children were gathered to spend the hot hours of the day there in a peaceful and happy confusion.⁸³⁸

Trees are considered strong, leading to an Andaandi wish expressed on feast days:

*TOMBI MENKON – BAPIC BELMENKON – TENNE WIDEGIP
TAN6EDEN.*

*tombi menkon – baris belmenkon – tenne tenne widegir
tanceden.*

without breaking – without detaching – may you taste the feast day again and again.⁸³⁹

The first and second subordinate clauses refer to the branches of the tree.

If *jowwi* remains unspecified, it means the *sant* acacia (*vachellia nilotica*) that survives under severe weather conditions like heat and aridity and therefore accommodates well to the weather conditions in the Nile valley. Its shade is valued; its strong timber (*saale/saalee*) is used for boat and house

⁸³⁸ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1909: 13-14; in the German original: “Das Tal der Schätze besaß nicht nur Palmen, sondern bei weitem größere und sehr nützliche Bäume: Akazien, Lebbach und Sykomoren. In dem köstlichen, dichten und dauerhaften Schatten dieser mächtigen, starken Bäume sammelten sich ganze Herden Vierfüßler, ungezähltes zahmes und wildes Gevögel, und Schatten eingeborener Männer, Frauen und Kinder, in friedlich-fröhlichem Durcheinander die heißen Tagesstunden dort zu verbringen.” – “Treasure“ is the English translation of Arabic *kinz* from which the Kenzi derive their name.

⁸³⁹ Abu Bakr Khayri 2019, p.c.

construction. On its downside there are the thorns. While the wood of the *sant* acacia tree is green, the blossoming does not fall down.

The halfa grass (*hambarte/hamarte/ambarte*; *desmostachya bipinnata* (L.) Stapf) is also typical for a Nubian village. For a farmer it is unwanted, as it renders the fertile land useless. When pulled out from the soil, it recovers quickly. Its shoots are upright, prick and hurt. Still, due to its flexibility it has been used for a variety of items, such as a simple rope. However, that rope is not strong enough to tether a donkey. Also, prior to the *hijra* it was an important fodder for livestock, besides the remains of harvested crops.⁸⁴⁰

Further away from the river the soil becomes sandy with only a few wild plants, among them the apple of Sodom (*habid/'ushshi*; *calotropis procera*) that has a green ball-like fruit. It multiplies easily, its white liquid is very dangerous, especially for the eyes. In Islam, it is a metaphor for Satan. A farmer wants to get rid of it as much as a Muslim of Satan. One of the few benefits is its use for making fire in the absence of matches.⁸⁴¹

The thistle (Andaandi *naany*) is a type of parasitic plant whose thorns are difficult to pull out.

Fruits have been rare all over Nubia. The banana (*mooz*, Arabic loanword) only became available in Nubia through modern means of transportation.

A8.1 ⁸⁴² *Ḷᶐᶐᶐᶐ ṬENN KINICCEḶᶐḶᶐ BĒḶᶐIN.*

jowwi tenn kinisseged beerin.

jowwi tenn kinisse=ged beer-in

sant.acacia 3SG:POSS thorn(s)=INS grow-3SG

The acacia grows with the thorns.

⇒ It is not my fault, that's my nature. I cannot be changed.

⇒ A bad family raises children with bad behaviour.

⁸⁴⁰ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 1979: 31.

⁸⁴¹ MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 90.

⁸⁴² From ḶᶐMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 27); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, 'Abdullahi 'Uthmān. – Compare M13.5 with similar meaning.

A8.2 ⁸⁴³ *Ἐἶλε δέσσειν τογῶρ ἀγίρου, τένν βαράμ ἀδδο τοῦβ τῶν.*

saale dessen togoor aagiru, tenn baram addo tub toon.

saale *desse=n* *togoor* *aag-r-u* ...

acacia.wood green=GEN under stay-NEUT-1PL

tenn *baram* *ar=ro* *tub* *toor-n*

3SG:POSS blossoming 1PL=LOC sweep enter-3SG

We stay under the green acacia wood, [to my surprise] its blossoming sweeps and enters [falls] on us.

⇒ Something unexpected has happened.

⇒ Someone is exaggerating.

A8.3 ⁸⁴⁴ *ὠϊρεγον ῥαβιδτονγονον βιτᾶνιγι οὐσκιν, βεν ἀδემ οὐσκεδι κῶμοϋνοϋν.*

shiregon habidtongonon bitaanigi uskin, ben adem uskedti koomunun.

shire=gon *habid=gon=gonon* *bitaan-i=gi* ...

tamarisk=CO apple.of.Sodom=CO=COM child-PL=ACC

uski-n *ben adem* *usked=gi* *koor-munun*

give.birth-3SG human birth=ACC have-NEG

Both the tamarisk and the apple of Sodom give birth to children, [one] human does not have a birth [child].

uskid is a metaphor for ‘child’.

⇒ As the *habid* plant has many offspring, so human beings who are much more valuable should have at least as many ancestors.

⇒ A man should have more than one wife to beget more children.

⁸⁴³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

⁸⁴⁴ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muṣṭafa Samiltod, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid, ‘Abd al-Rāziq Muḥammad, Kamal Hussein.

Many Nubians perceive the proverb as religious wisdom, as it encourages anyone who has sufficient finances to marry at least a second wife. Altogether, a second marriage seems to occur more frequently among Nubians in the Dongola Reach than among the Mattokki, where no similar proverb was heard.

A8.4 ⁸⁴⁵ *INĠOY ʒABIḌIP KOYΛTIḠI ʍOYĠIPAN.*

ingu habidir kultigi shuugiran.

in-gu habid=ir kult=gi shuug-r-an
DEM-PL apple.of.Sodom=LOC fly=ACC drive-NEUT-3PL

From these apples of Sodom they scare the fly away.

-gu is the Old Nubian plural suffix, also in A19.44. In Andaandi and Mattokki, it has mainly been replaced by -i and its variants.

⇒ He secures something that has no benefit.

⇒ He does something ridiculous.

⇒ He is that bad that even a fly should not go to him.

A8.5 ⁸⁴⁶ *NĀʾ NERĠḠKEḌ KŌḌKAN BELMENIḌ.*

naany neriigked koodkan belmenil.

naany neriig=ged kood-ki-an bel-men-il
thistle pottery=INS scratch-COND-3PL exit-NEG-PTC:IPF

[He is like] The thistle that cannot be pulled out [even] when they scratch it with some [piece of] pottery.

koodkan While one would expect *koodkiran*, here the word is contracted. That is why I omit the NEUT when glossing.

⇒ He is a bad person one cannot get rid of.

English: He turns up like a bad penny.

⁸⁴⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 164); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan. Ḥāmid Khabīr received the proverb from Yāsīn Ḥisēn (Surtood).

⁸⁴⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 165); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

M8.1 ⁸⁴⁷ *ΕΨΕΙΝ ΑΜΒΑΡΤΕ ΒΟΔΚΙΝ, ΤΕΝΝ ΑΓΑΒΙΡ ΒΟΔ!*

eshey=na ambarte boodkin, tenn agaabir bood!

eshey=na ambarte bood-ki-n ...

village-GEN halfa.grass run-COND-3SG:SUB

tenna agaab=ir bood-Ø

3SG:POSS rear=LOC run-IMP:SG

When the halfa grass of your [home] village runs [away], run behind its back!

⇒ Cherish the homeland, in all its poverty.

⇒ Hold on to your homeland, whatever might happen.

Also in the diaspora most Nubians feel much attached to their home villages. Therefore, after the construction of the Aswan Dam and with each of the Dam's heightenings many Mattokki affected by the submergence of their homes and agricultural plots chose to move upwards toward the inhospitable cliffs instead of settling somewhere else.⁸⁴⁸ During the building of the Aswan High Dam many Egyptian Nubians would have preferred moving even further up the hills to leaving their homeland.

The proverb presents the Nubian equivalent of the German term 'Heimat'. Another proverb that shows a similar affinity to the homeland is A9.28.

M8.2 ⁸⁴⁹ *ΑΪ ΜΟΖΓΙ ΓΕΨΨΙΡΕΡΓΙ, ΤΕΝΝΑ ΤΩΥΡ ΤΩΝ ΖΑΧΑ Α ΒΕΛ ΤΑ.*

ay moozgi geshshireegi, tenna tuur toon hasa aa bel taa.

ay mooz=gi geshshiree-rigi ...

1SG banana=ACC peel.LV-CO

⁸⁴⁷ From MASSENBAACH 1931: 197. She gives it the meaning "Halte die Heimat fest, in ihrer ganzen Armut." [trans.: Hold on to the homeland, in all its poverty.] Nowadays the proverb is unknown even to Mattokki with a comprehensive understanding of proverbs and history. A. Goo-Grauer remembers it.

⁸⁴⁸ MASSENBAACH 1931: 197.

⁸⁴⁹ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid, Muḥarram Maḥmūd.

tenna tuur toon hasa aag bel taar-Ø
 3SG:POSSinside from small.stone PROG exit come-3SG

I peel the banana and [to my surprise] from its inside a small stone comes out.

-rigi/-irgi geshshireergi is uninflected and therefore a converb or a “verbum conjunctum”.⁸⁵⁰ As it has a different subject than *taa*, it is a different-subject converb.

⇒ He treats me unfairly.

⇒ I had bad luck.

The metaphor was performed in a song by Şidqi Aḥmad.

4.9. Animals: Domestic

Until recently even Nubians with below average Nubian language competency remembered lexemes denoting animals well.⁸⁵¹ In the following, I classify animal proverbs in five semantic domains. Domestic animals (*urti*) being considered the favourite proverbial animals in most societies⁸⁵² come first. Further domains are wild animals in and around the house, birds, fish and dangerous animals. Mainly animals that occur in the proverbs are described, the length of description depending on their importance in the proverbs.

Inside a village, domestic animals have their own pens:

... the [domestic] animals were always kept at the farms in shelters made of palm tree branches and *gareed*. To keep an animal inside the house was considered unhealthy and unacceptable.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵⁰ MASSENBACH 1933: §16F3. This paragraph has an example of a same-subject converb. It cannot be concluded that *-rigi* marks only different-subject converbs.

⁸⁵¹ When visiting an extended family from Kultoos residing in Khartoum (in 2009) after the meal my wife collected names of animals. She was astonished to discover that for many of the animals the men only knew the Andaandi terms, not the Arabic ones. Does this have something to do with the fact that they lived near animals before moving to the city and now no longer talk about them?

⁸⁵² Cf. KRIKMANN 2001: 12. A description of some domestic animals in Andaandi is found in MASSENBACH (1962: 134+135).

⁸⁵³ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 57. Arabic *jarīd* (here *gareed*) are palm-branches.

The camel (*kam*), frequently associated with nomadic Arabs, is highly respected due to its stoic nature, alongside its rider.⁸⁵⁴ Camels were bred in the Dongola Reach,⁸⁵⁵ mainly used for the transport of goods, rarely of humans. One woman from Agade remembers as a child seeing a great number of camels.⁸⁵⁶ These days, transport camels have been replaced largely by cars and lorries.

While for a human the venom of a horned viper is fatal, a camel is not harmed due to its thick hoof that the venom cannot penetrate.⁸⁵⁷ The meat of the camel is considered a delicacy, eaten at special occasions.

Horses (*kaj*) are highly treasured, economically out of reach for most Nubian families I have met so far. The Napatan rulers of the Pharaonic 25th dynasty were devastated about the state in which horses were kept in Egypt.⁸⁵⁸ Both, horses and camels, were used in fighting:

Dongolawi horse-breeding ... eventually fell into decline when the kings of Argo became a shadow of what they once were and could no longer maintain their own troop.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁴ HERZOG (1957a: 48) writing about the Mattokki. The lexeme *kam* is regarded as a loanword.

JACKSON 1919: 106: “[T]he superior airs apparently assumed by the camel are generally recognised by the Arabs themselves who state they are due to the fact that the camel knows the hundredth attribute of Allah, although such knowledge has been withheld from man.” Human beings allegedly only know ninety-nine attributes (i.e. the ninety-nine beautiful names) of *Allāh*.

⁸⁵⁵ MASSENBACH 1962: 135, quoting an Andaandi speaker: “[In] Amin Togo, Arafhad, Latti und West-Alt Dongola; diese züchten Kamele, seien es Nubier oder Araber.“ [trans.: [In] Amin Togo, Arafhad, Latti and West Old Dongola; they rear camels, both Nubians and Arabs.]

⁸⁵⁶ Awātif Samiltood 2009, p.c.

⁸⁵⁷ Husband of Umm Ḥamdi 2003, p.c.; Abdel Halim Sabbar 2011, p.c.

⁸⁵⁸ SCHOLZ 2006: 92.

⁸⁵⁹ HERZOG 1957a: 128; in the German original: “Die Zucht des Dongolawi-Pferdes ... ging erst ein, als die Könige von Argo nur noch ein Schattendasein führten und keine eigene Truppe mehr unterhalten konnten.“

Around the late 1950s a Dongolawi travelling to Aswan reflected that in Dongola “famous people have been rearing horses till this day. They have a lot of good horses.”⁸⁶⁰

By contrast, during my own travels I never saw horses in a Nubian village of the Dongola Reach, nor did I hear Nubians active in agriculture mentioning horses when asking them about their livestock, the same as Enderlin in 1913.⁸⁶¹

Some Mattokki remember that before the *hijra* a few affluent inhabitants of Egyptian Lower Nubia owned a horse. At low tide, a horse could even wade through the river Nile with the rider on its back. Otherwise, horses in pre-*hijra* Nubia have not been mentioned.⁸⁶²

The Nubian donkey (*hanu*) is the ancestor of the European donkey.⁸⁶³ Stupidity is not considered to be one its characteristics as in Europe. Instead, it was cherished more highly than among neighbouring Arabs. A Nubian from the Dongola Reach never lent his donkey to someone else. In the Sudan, a woman may ride on a donkey, however, unlike a man her legs must be on the same side.⁸⁶⁴ Among nearly all Mattokki it was the only animal available for land transportation. That is why it was a real struggle when Nubians were not allowed to take their donkeys with them during the *hijra*. One Mattokki later returned to fetch his donkey and take it to the resettlement villages.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶⁰ MASSENBAACH 1962: 135; quoting an Andaandi speaker. In the German original: “... züchten bekannte Leute Pferde bis heute. Bei ihnen sind viele gute Pferde.”

⁸⁶¹ ENDERLIN 1920a: 4. He assumes that the Turkish troops during the Mameluke period and the wars during the Mahdiya led to their extinction. – While Maḥmūd Sa‘īd’s wife (2022, p.c.) remembers having seen horses between the Dongolawi villages of Irtide and Khannaag, they all belonged to Arabs, none to Dongolawi.

⁸⁶² ‘Abdu al-Sunni 2022, p.c.; Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2022, p.c.; ‘Umar ‘Abd al-‘Aziz 2022, p.c.

⁸⁶³ As explained on the boards at the Swiss Open-Air Museum in Ballenberg (visited on 27 October 2017).

⁸⁶⁴ Nemat Abdalrahman 2016, p.c.; Aḥmad ‘Uthmān 2016, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2019, p.c.

⁸⁶⁵ Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2019, p.c. about his father.

There were two types of saddles (*degir*; also meaning ‘to cover’) for both the horse and the donkey. For donkeys the simple one was made of rugs and plants and employed on short distances within a village. The better one was made from wood and used for donkeys and horses when riding to another village, or attending a wedding.⁸⁶⁶

The main fodder given to a donkey is clover (*alluug*). It is offered in a bag hung around the donkey’s neck, especially before the rider jumps on the donkey. Otherwise the rider is defied. Before a journey grains are added.

The average rural family rarely owns a cow (*tii*) or a bull/ox (*gur*), for both are considered a fortune. The Nubian cow is related to the African buffalo, quite different from and less fat than its European counterpart. A cow gives birth to a calf (*gurtood*) and provides its owner with milk. They are kept in a shed (*kerri*), a pen (*kude*), or an enclosure.⁸⁶⁷ In the modern Dongola Reach animal sheds outside of the villages are a typical feature.



Figure 5: Cow shed (*kerri*) on Merowaarti Island

⁸⁶⁶ ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2019, p.c.

⁸⁶⁷ Men in Urbi 2005, p.c. I follow ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965] and MASSENBAACH 1933 who translate *tii* as ‘cow’/‘Kuh’. Anything else would make reading the proverbs more tedious.

An anthropologist visiting Lower Nubia prior to the *hijra*, describes its tasks and the risks related to owning a cow:

Cows ... were corporately owned and were an essential source of power in the traditional Nubian economy, being the only creatures used to turn the heavy water wheels. ... Yet cows, subject to death and sickness, were a rapidly depreciating investment, somewhat redeemed by the possibility of calving. ... Buying shares in a cow was a relatively high yielding if somewhat risky investment for the Nubian with extra cash.⁸⁶⁸

In the early 2000s one still encountered a working ox pulling the farming tools more frequently than a tractor.

Milk (*icci*) is a delicacy as giving milk is mainly limited for a period after calving. At the beginning of the 20th century, because “from the dry durra straw they [the cows] cannot produce milk”⁸⁶⁹, green fodder was added. Goat’s milk is also common. It is especially given to infants as it is considered safer than cow’s milk. Milk from camels is also fairly common.⁸⁷⁰

The average rural family keeps a few goats (*berti*) and sheep (*eged*).⁸⁷¹ Sheep are considered cleverer than townspeople imagine. One Mattokki remembers that the villagers used to call for their sheep when the shepherdess returned

⁸⁶⁸ FERNEA and FERNEA 1991: 143. Note: Shares in date palm and waterwheel could not be bought.

⁸⁶⁹ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1902: 28; in the German original: “... von dem trockenen Dourrah-Stroh können sie [die Kühe] nicht Milch bekommen.”

⁸⁷⁰ ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd 2023, p.c.

⁸⁷¹ Due to the scarcity of fodder in Lower Nubia after the construction of the Aswan Dam and before the construction of the Aswan High Dam, some villages had only two goats altogether. (HERZFELD 1966b: 25)

eged usually stands for the female sheep, the ‘ewe’ (MASSENBACH 1933: 160 and Kamal Hussein 2017, p.c.). Most contemporary Nubians are less specific, also, in the proverbs there does not seem to be a need for such a distinction. That is why I continue using the general term ‘sheep’.

to the village in the evening. The sheep or at least the head sheep recognised their owners.⁸⁷²

One woman in the Dongola Reach remembers guarding animals in her childhood. She and her friends passed the time playing games and reciting a sing-song counting rhyme.⁸⁷³ Besides looking after them, selling goats and sheep were mainly women's work:

While their [the Mattokki women's] transactions were not supposed to involve males, one widespread and important exception existed. Most women raised sheep and goats and sold the young animals to men, either local residents or outsiders ... Even a woman living with her husband sold her animals herself.⁸⁷⁴

Nearly all farmers own some chicken (*dummade/darbad*). They search on the ground for corn without obvious direction and within a limited radius.

Due to the construction and heightenings of the Aswan Dam, already prior to the *hijra* inhabitants had problems keeping their domestic animals. It "became almost impossible because the fodder stocks were far below what was required."⁸⁷⁵

Being closer to the Aswan Dam, the Mattokki villages fared worse. In the resettlement villages even that was topped. The new government-built houses differentiated between an "entrance gate" and an "animal gate",⁸⁷⁶ and not, as would have been culturally appropriate, between men's and women's gate.

⁸⁷² A shepherdess was usually a Bedouin. In Lower Nubia, it was especially difficult to find pasture. Only in the summer could the sheep graze the harvested fields. (Ahmad 'Uthmān 2016, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.)

⁸⁷³ Young woman from Aartigaasha 2010, p.c.

⁸⁷⁴ CALLENDER 2010: 194. Cf. HOPKINS 2006: 303, speaking about Egypt in general: "Caring for animals in the stalls (including milking and the preparation of dairy products) is usually a woman's chore." Cf. AGHA 2019: 3, who lists "cows, goats, sheep, and chickens" as economic resources of Nubian women. – El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2015, p.c., confirms it for Dongola.

⁸⁷⁵ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 1979: 30, about the Fadijja village Ed Derr. In the German original: "[Die Haltung von Haustieren] wurde fast zur Unmöglichkeit, da die Futterbestände bei weitem den Erfordernissen nicht gerecht werden konnten."

⁸⁷⁶ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 41.

The Mattokki were forced to keep their domestic animals inside the compound,⁸⁷⁷ contradicting the Nubian perception of hygiene and cleanliness.

A9.1 ⁸⁷⁸ *ωελ ὀϋκκιν, καμ νογιν.*

wel uukkin, kam nogin.

wel uukki-n kam nog-in

dog bark-3SG camel walk-3SG

The dog barks, the camel walks.

⇒ A weak person does not have any effect on a powerful person.

⇒ His slanderous talk does not influence us.

MSA: . الكلاب تنبح و القافلة تسير.

“The dogs bark and the caravan walks on.”

SCA: . الكلب ينبح و الجمل يفوت.

“The dog barks and the camel walks on.”

About hundred years ago the corresponding Sudanese Arabic proverb was explained:

... one of the neatest of the Sudan proverbs that has often been quoted with effect when a harassed official has to calm the ruffled feelings of some person who imagines that his so-called ‘sheraf’ (honour) has been insulted by a junior. There is some difference of opinion as to whether “the camel” refers to the camel itself or its rider.⁸⁷⁹

The Andaandi and the SCA proverb refer to a camel and are thus related closer to each other than to the MSA version.

⁸⁷⁷ Ajīb Jabāli 2017, p.c.

⁸⁷⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 107; and 2016: proverb 105); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. The proverb has the same meaning as A11.3 and A28.15. ‘Amr Nūr al-Dīn adds =gon after both nouns, further connecting both clauses. In Zaghawa it is “The camel is walking; the dog is barking.” (SULEIMAN OSMAN 2006: proverb 33). The SCA idiom is taken from JACKSON 1919: 106; and ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 293.

⁸⁷⁹ JACKSON 1919: 106.

- A9.2** ⁸⁸⁰ *ΚΑΜΔΟΥΛ ΚΑΜΤΟΔ ΑΝΚΟΝ.*
kamduul kamtod ankon.
kam-duul kam-tod an-ko-n
 camel-QUAL camel-QUAL INCH-PRT1-3SG
 The big/old camel became an unsatisfactory camel.
- tod* may either be a polite form ('beloved'), or a depreciative form, as here. It is to be distinguished from the diminutive *-tood*.
- ⇒ He was an influential person, did something bad and his influence waned.
- English: Pride comes before a fall.
- A9.3** ⁸⁸¹ *ΓΟΡ ΚΑΛΙΝ, ΚΑΜΚΟΤΤΙ ΑΝΜΟΥΝ.*
goor kalin, kamkotti anmun.
goor kal-in kam-kotti an-mun
 ant eat-3SG camel-as.tall.as INCH-NEG
 The ant eats [a lot], it does not become as tall as the camel.
- ⇒ Some things do not change.
- A9.4** ⁸⁸² *ΝΟΓΟ ΓΑΛΙΓΙ ΚΑΜΙΡ ΚΟΥΔΟΥΡΡΑΝ ΓΑΛ, ΚΟΥΤΤΕ ΟΒΕΓΙ ΤΟΥΒΚΟΝ.*
nogo gaaligi kamir kujurran gaal, kutte obegi tubkon.
nogo gaali=gi kam=ir kujur-r-an ...
 female.slave expensive=ACC camel=LOC put.on-NEUT-3PL

⁸⁸⁰ From Mu‘amr al-Fīl and relatives, Kultoos; co-investigated with the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd.

⁸⁸¹ From ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 7. The proverb has a similar structure as A11.1.

⁸⁸² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Taha A. Taha; variant from Samira El-Melik-Ziadah. GOLKA 1994: 32, has a slightly similar Malagasy proverb: ‘Set upright, only to be knocked down, like a stonemason’s mallet.’ It refers to a king’s courtiers falling into disgrace. – Cf. A23.12 that talks in a similar way about a male slave.

gaal *kutte* *obe=gi* *tub-ko-n*
 SUB descend dung=ACC sweep-PRT1-3SG

After they put the expensive female slave on a camel, she descended and swept the dung.

nogo Before 1880 when slaves were still held in Egypt they could achieve high positions: “Throughout these centuries, being a slave did not exclude one from either power or ... knowledge.”⁸⁸³ Looked at from a Sudanese perspective “‘slaves’ show that they have no dignity by not revolting when insulted or abused.”⁸⁸⁴

kujur derives from **kuj-ir*, with *-ir* a CAUS or TR suffix, meaning ‘to cause to be above’.

gaal The verb of a subordinate clause closed by *gaal* is marked by neutral tense.

⇒ He advanced to a prestigious position (job, duty), yet could not stay at that level, and returned to his original position.

⇒ He was helped by others to achieve better yet he did not make it.

⇒ Everyone knows his place (status) in society. A slave stays a slave. There is no way to improve one’s place.

⇒ Even when a president’s seat is offered to a slave, he stays a slave.

⇒ What goes up, comes down.

variant *nogogi kamir kujre daarangi, kutte kashshigi bittikon.*

Putting the female slave on a camel, she descended and picked up the dried stalks.

The proverb does not say what exactly made the slave lose her new position, also why she did not revolt against losing it. Sitting on a camel, she definitely was out of place, not knowing the right etiquette.⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸³ TROUTT POWELL 2013: 14.

⁸⁸⁴ KRONENBERG 1987: 394.

⁸⁸⁵ Taha A. Taha 2012, p.c., explains in two emails: “I think it refers to social stratification – ... that whatever they do or [however they] change their status (figuratively

When hearing the proverb I wondered whether slaves had no honour and honour could not be taught or gained. As no Andaandi speaker has confirmed such an interpretation so far, in this thesis I only carefully apply an honour-shame scheme.⁸⁸⁶

A9.5 ⁸⁸⁷ *KAM TENN KOYPOYΦΓI NALMOYN.*

kam tenn kurunygi nalmun.

kam tenn kuruny=gi nal-mun

camel 3SG:POSSHump=ACC see-NEG

The camel does not see its hump.

⇒ Nobody is perfect.

⇒ A warning against rushing to judge or belittle a person.

⇒ One sees the faults of the others, yet not one's own.

SCA: الجمل ما بشوف عوجة رقيق.

“The camel does not see the bend of its neck.”

ECA: الجمل يمشى و يحدف لورا يشوف عيوب الناس و عيوبه لا يرى.

“The camel walks and sees the people's fault yet does not see its own faults.”

climbing on the camel's back, etc.) they eventually go back to their place in society (job) and do what they usually do.” He also wonders about the wording: “[If *gaali*] means ‘expensive’, it would mean ‘the expensive nogo’ and I don’t think that will either flow with the rest of the proverb, though it may be possible to talk of an expensive nogo at the time.”

⁸⁸⁶ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2012, p.c., does not discover any kind of honour-shame background in proverb A9.4. In proverb A19.32 I carefully approach that topic again. – Also MERZ 2020 recommends a cautious approach.

⁸⁸⁷ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein. Also in www.iqraweb.net/حكم-وامثال-نوبية/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision. MOHAMED MUTWELI Badr 1978: proverb 39, is the same. In Zaghawa it is “A camel does not see the curvature of its neck.” (SULEIMAN OSMAN 2006: proverb 68) The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 373. Muḥammad ‘Ali (p.c.) adds that the final word of the ECA idiom is MSA in order for the rhythm.

A9.6 ⁸⁸⁸ *KAM KAḌKI, MĀN TENN KOYPOYFΓI NĀL E DAĀKON.*

kam kajki, man tenn kurunygi nal e daakon.

kam kaj=gi man tenn kuruny=gi ...
 camel horse=ACC DEM 3SG:POSSHump=ACC
nal e daa-ko-n
 see say exist-PRT1-3SG

The camel assumed the horse to see its [the horse's] hump [while the camel's hump is much larger].

⇒ He refers to someone else's problem, although his problem is much bigger.

⇒ He is unrealistic and lies.

variant *kam men kajki, hee man tenn kurunygi, ekon.*

kam men kaj=gi hee man ... e-ko-n
 camel DISC horse=ACC INT DEM ... say-PRT1-3SG

Indeed, the camel said to the horse: Look, this is its [the horse's] hump!

men indicates that something happens contrary to expectation.

A9.7 ⁸⁸⁹ *EP KAMΓI NĀLIN ΓŌN, TENN OCCI TIGIN.*

er kamgi nalin goon, tenn ossi tigin.

er kam=gi nal-in goon tenn ossi tig-in
 2SG camel=ACC see-2SG SUB 3SG:POSSleg trace-2SG

Although you see the camel, you trace its leg [footprint].

⇒ While the task is very easy, you make it difficult.

⇒ The evidence (e.g. in a court case) is obvious.

⁸⁸⁸ From Khālid Ḥajj, Lebeb; variant in ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 187). The construction *e daa* is dealt with by EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015.

⁸⁸⁹ From 'Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad, Gurunti.

A9.8 ⁸⁹⁰ ΚΟΥΡΟΥΒΒΕ ΚΑΜΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΔΑΡΙΒΓΙΡ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡΙΝ.

kurucce kamduulgi daribgir undurin.

kurucce kam-duul=gi darib=gir undur-in
 whip camel-QUAL=ACC way=ALL insert-3SG

A whip brings the big camel on the way.

kurucce is a whip made from the fibre of plants, also used to beat children. It is to be distinguished from a whip made from leather (*kori*).

⇒ If a child is beaten when it is young it will walk the right way when it is old.

English: Spare the rod and spoil the child.

A9.9 ⁸⁹¹ ΑΪΔΑΝ ΤΙΡΔΑΝ, ΚΑΜΔΑΝ ΤΕΝΝ ΤΟΥΡΔΑΝΚΙΡΙΪ ΑΝΟCCΟΥ.

aydaan tirdaan, kamdaan tenn tuurdaankirii anossu.

ay=daan tir=daan kam=daan ...

1SG=CO 3PL=CO [camel=CO

tenn tuur=daan= kirii an-os-s-u

3SG:POSS droppings=CO]=SIM INCH-PFV-PRT2-1PL

Both I and they, both the camel and its droppings, we became similar.

=*daan* is used mainly south of Dongola town and a variant of =*gon*.

⇒ There is a huge difference between myself and him.

A9.10 ⁸⁹² ΔΔΕΜ ΟΥCΝΑΡ ΓΑCΟΥΩΕΡΚΙ ΔΡΡΑΝ, ΚΑΜΓΙ ΓΑΒΟΥΡΡΟ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡΔΑΝΝ ΔΟΓΟΡ ΔΟΥΛΛΟΝ.

⁸⁹⁰ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Fu'ād 'Akūd, Shawqi 'Abd al-'Azīz.

⁸⁹¹ From MUḤAMMAD SHARIF, Shebatood; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein.

⁸⁹² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 145); co-investigated with 'Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Ḥamed.

adem uusnar gasuweerki aarran, kamgi gaburro undurdann dogoor dullon.

adem uus=nar gasu=weer=gi aar-ran kam=gi ...
 human bad=AD thing=INDF=ACC take-INF [camel=ACC
gabur=ro undur-ran=n dogoor dullo-n
 grave=LOC insert-INF]=GEN COMP heavy-COP

Taking something toward a bad human, it is heavier [more difficult] than pushing the camel into a grave.

gabur (var. *gubba*) is the vaulted grave of a Sufi sheikh. Its entrance is very narrow.

kamgi gaburro undurdaan reminds of the biblical phrase ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle [than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God].’⁸⁹³

⇒ Getting support from a stingy person is nearly impossible.

A9.11 ⁸⁹⁴ *ENN BACIL ON INĒNN TŌΔN KAMIP KOYSMENEΛ.*

enn basil on ineenn toodn kamir kujmenel.

enn basil on ...
 2SG:POSS food.for.journey OPT
in-een=n tood=n kam=ir kuj-men-el
 2PL-mother=GEN son=GEN camel=LOC be.up-NEG-PTC:PF

Hopefully your food for the journey is not put on your maternal brother’s camel.

ineenn tood As a Muslim man may marry up to four women, his children may have different mothers. The maternal brother is considered the closest male relative.

⇒ I hoped to receive support from you, as you are my closest relative, however, you did not help me. So you should not expect anything from your relatives in the future.

⁸⁹³ Holy Bible: New International Version; Matthew 19: 24, Mark 10: 25, and Luke 18: 25.

⁸⁹⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 131); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

- A9.12** ⁸⁹⁵ *KAM OYPTINBIN BARRER DĀ BŌYΛ.*
kam urtincin barrer daa buul.
kam urti-nci=n barre=r ...
 camel domestic.animal-PL=GEN intervening.space=LOC
daa buu-il
 be.present STAT-PTC:IPF
 He is a camel among the domestic animals [as the sheep].
 ⇒ He mixes with younger people.

- A9.13** ⁸⁹⁶ *MOYPCIN KAS BŌΔOCKIN, ALĒN KAS ΔŌYPMOYN.*
mursin kaj boodoskin, aleen kaj duurmun.
mursi=n kaj bood-os-ki-n ...
 lie=GEN horse run-PFV-COND-3SG
alee=n kaj duur-mun
 truth=GEN horse reach-NEG
 [Even] when the horse of lies has just [began to] run, the horse
 of truth cannot reach [it].
 ⇒ Lies move fast; it takes much longer for the truth to spread.

On the surface A9.13 seems to contradict M19.34, A20.10, A22.19, and M22.25. However, its focus is different. Even if a lie is rectified at one place, it continues to circulate at other localities, as stated by A9.13. Therefore, in the end speaking the truth will be the better way, as stated by the other proverbs.

- A9.14** ⁸⁹⁷ *TENN KAS BŌΔIN, GOYTĀPKI ΔOYKKIMOYN.*
tenn kaj boodin, gutaarki dukkimun.

⁸⁹⁵ From www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية/; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⁸⁹⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 100; and 2016: proverb 99); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. The proverb is very similar to A9.34 and A22.29.

⁸⁹⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza; variants from ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 192) and ‘Abd al-‘Aal

tenn kaj bood-in ...

3SG:POSShorse run-3SG

gutaar=gi dukki-mun

sand.storm=ACC pull.out-NEG

His horse runs, it does not cause a sand storm.

⇒ He tries hard to do his work, yet without result.

variant *tenn kaj gobirin goon, gutaarki koomun.*

Although his horse runs away, it does not have [create] a sand storm.

variant *inn kaj boodin, ghubaarki koomun.*

Your (PL) horse runs, it does not have dust.

A9.15 ⁸⁹⁸ *ΚΑΔΛΙ ΣΑΓΚΙ ΚΑΛΛΑΝ.*

kajli saagki kalkan.

kaj-li saag=gi kal-r-an

horse-PL snaffle=ACC eat-NEUT-3PL

Horses eat the snaffle.

saag When running very fast, a horse chews the snaffle.

⇒ Everyone wants to be the first.

A9.16 ⁸⁹⁹ *ΖΑΝΟΥΓΙ ΒΕ̄, ΩΕΛΓΕΔ ΔΩ̄Ε̄.*

hanugi bee, welged ashee.

hanu=gi beer-n wel=ged ashee-n

donkey=ACC kill-3SG dog=INS evening.meal-COP

He kills the donkey; it is the evening meal for the dog.

Şadıq ‘Ālim. Hāmid Khabīr received his variant from Muḥammad ‘Ali, Old Dongola. *ghubaar* in the second variant is an Arabic loanword.

⁸⁹⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 137); co-investigated with ‘Awad Ḥasan.

⁸⁹⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 90; and 2016: proverb 89); co-investigated with Mu‘amr al-Fīl, Muḥammad Ḥasan. The last word could be written *asheen*, but this would make the rhyme less easy to observe.

- ⇒ The children of a wealthy father spend his money while he is away.
- ⇒ When the owner of the business is absent, his business partner acts differently.
- English: While the cat's away the mice will play.

A9.17 ⁹⁰⁰ ΖΑΝΟΥΓΙ ΔΑΝΜΕΝ ΓΟΝ, ΚΟΙΡΚΙ ΚΟΚΚΙΝ.

hanugi jaanmen goon, kojirki kokkin.

hanu=gi jaan-men goon kojir=gi kokki-n
 donkey=ACC buy-NEG SUB peg=ACC knock-3SG

Although he has not bought a donkey, he hammers a peg.

kojir A wooden [or sometimes metal] peg is hammered into the ground in order to tether the donkey.

- ⇒ He talks about the end of his work before having started.
- ⇒ He talks about something without having any knowledge.
- ⇒ Don't to rush to carry out a deed (e.g. marrying) prematurely!⁹⁰¹

English: Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.

variant *hanugi jaanmen goon, tokkon kojirki kokkimen!*

When you do not buy a donkey, just do not hammer a peg!

variant *gurki elmen goon, kojirki kokkin.*

Although he does not find the ox, he hammers a peg.

A9.18 ⁹⁰² ΖΑΝΟΥΓΙ ΚΟΥΒΒΕΓΜΕΝ ΓΟΝ, ΟCΣΙΝCΙ ΩΕΛΕΦΦΙΝ.

hanugi kucceegmen goon, ossinci welengin.

hanu=gi kucceeg-men goon ossi-nci weleng-in
 donkey=ACC get.up-NEG SUB leg-PL shake-3SG

⁹⁰⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 85; and 2016: proverb 84); co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Hishām Bashīr; variants from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and ‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadīq.

⁹⁰¹ TAHA 2011; with revised orthography.

⁹⁰² From ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Irtide; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

Although he does not get up a donkey, he shakes the legs.

⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.

⇒ He works without planning.

⇒ He talks about something without having any knowledge.

A9.19 ⁹⁰³ *ḠANOYGI KŌMEN ĠŌN, ΔΕΓΙΡΚΙ ḌΡΚΟΝ.*

hanugi koomen goon, degirki aarkon.

hanu=gi koor-men goon degir=gi aar-ko-n

donkey=ACC have-NEG SUB saddle=ACC grab-PRT1-3SG

Although he does not have a donkey, he grabs the saddle.

⇒ He does the second step first.

SCA: السرج قبل الحمار. – “The saddle before the donkey.”

A9.20 ⁹⁰⁴ *ḠANOYĠON TENN BITĀNGONON ĠOŌWIP TŌN.*

hanugon tenn bitaangonon gowwir toon.

hanu=gon tenn bitaan=gonon gowwi=r toor-n

donkey=CO 3SG:POSS child=COM well=LOC enter-3SG

And the donkey enters the well with its child [ass colt].

hanu A donkey sniffs at its ass colt and follows it wherever it goes.

⇒ One should do everything for one’s child.

One Nubian was told by his father about a similar behaviour of Nubian mothers in the past: According to the *baqt/bagid* agreement from the 7th century, Nubians had to deliver a fixed number of slaves to the Arab slave traders. When Nubian sons, especially from families where the father had already died, were led away, their mothers followed them into the desert and died there.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰³ From Thourya Muḥammad, Binna. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 313.

⁹⁰⁴ From ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Irtide.

⁹⁰⁵ ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd 2023, p.c.

When young, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli and one of his brothers watched a mother jump into a well to save her child who had fallen into it. The child survived but still limps.

A9.21 ⁹⁰⁶ *ΖΑΝΟΥ ΣΑΒΕ ΨΟΚΚΕΛΓΟΝ ΖΑΝΟΥ ΣΕΡΕΓΟΝ ΚΑΛΛΑΝ
ΚΑΨΨΙΓ ΔΓΙΝ.*

hanu sabe shokkelgon hanu sereegon kallon kashshig aagin.

hanu *sabe* *shokki-el=gon* **hanu** ...
donkey bad jump.up.and.down-PTC:PF=CO donkey
seree=gon kal-r-an kashshi=gi aag-in
good=CO eat-NEUT-3PL dried.stalk=ACC PROG-3SG

The bad donkey that jumped up and down, and the good [well-behaved] donkey eat the dried stalks [together].

sabe is the Nubianized form of Arabic *ša‘ab* ‘difficult’. The corresponding Andaandi lexeme is *milli* (bad). Here it denotes a donkey that is difficult to ride.

⇒ In the end, the good and the bad person share together, nobody is excluded.

The proverb explains an important principle of Nubian society.

A9.22 ⁹⁰⁷ *ΖΑΝΟΥ ΜΙΓΓΙ ΕΛΙΝ ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙΡ?*

hanu mingi elin uburtir?

hanu *mingi el-in uburti=r*
donkey Q:ACC find-3SG ash=LOC

What does the donkey find in the ash?

uburti There is no food in the ash after cooking with firewood. However, donkeys are believed to look for food even in the ash.

⁹⁰⁶ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Bashīr ‘Abdallah, ‘Abd al-Rāziq Muḥammad.

⁹⁰⁷ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 141); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

The true reason donkeys go to the ash is because they want to scratch when they feel itchy.

⇒ Why are you searching here?

⇒ Why are you doing something that has nothing to do with the other things?

A9.23 ⁹⁰⁸ ΖΑΝΟΥ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕ ΖΑΜΒΑΡΤΕΡ ΔΙΓ ΒΟΪΛ.

hanu urumme hambarter dig buul.

hanu urumme hambarte=r dig ...
 donkey black halfa.grass=LOC get.bound
buu-il

STAT-PTC:IPF

[He is like] The black donkey tied at the halfa grass.

hanu urumme There are black donkeys in Nubia, however, they are rare. A black donkey is peculiar. That is probably the reason why this metaphor is chosen.

⇒ He is somebody I cannot benefit from and do not want to have anything to do with.

⇒ He is of no use.

A9.24 ⁹⁰⁹ ΖΑΝΟΥ ΤΕ ΓΟΥΡΤΩΔΤΙ ΟΥΣΚΙΝ?

hanu te gurtoodti uskin?

hanu te gur-tood=gi uski-n
 donkey Q:PRED bull-QUAL=ACC give.birth-3SG

Does the donkey give birth to a calf?

⇒ Is it possible that bad parents beget good children?

⁹⁰⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 135); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

⁹⁰⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 186); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

A9.25 ⁹¹⁰ *ΖΑΜΑΡΤΕΝ ΚΩῩΣ ΖΑΝΟΥΚΙΡ̄ΙΝ, ΣΟΜΙΡΑΝ, Δ̄ΡΕΓΙΡ Τ̄ΟΝ.*

hamarten kuuj hanukiriin, jomiran, aaregir toon.

hamarte=n kuuj hanu=kirii-n ...

halfa.grass=GEN shoot donkey=SIM-COP

jom-r-an aare=gir too-n

beat-NEUT-3PL inside=ALL enter-3SG

The shoot of the halfa grass is similar to the donkey: [When] They hit, it enters [pierces] the inside.

hamarte (va. *hambarte*) A hungry donkey, in contrast to a human, eats the shoot of the halfa grass when nothing else is available.

hanu Donkeys are known to behave stubbornly, contrary to the desires of the rider.

⇒ You do not fulfil your promises.

⇒ He is doing differently than told.

⇒ I do not desire your return.

A9.26 ⁹¹¹ *ἘΝΓΙ Δ̄ἘΩΝΚ̄ΑΡ̄Ο ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡ̄Δ̄ΑΝ, ΖΑΝΟΥΓΙ ΚΟΥΒΙΡ̄ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡ̄Δ̄ΑΝ ΚΙΡ̄Ι Δ̄ΝΟΚΚΟΝ.*

eengi deewnkaaro undurdaan, hanugi kubir undurdaankirii anoskon.

een=gi deewnkaa=ro undur=daan hanu=gi ...

woman=ACC kitchen=LOC insert=CO [donkey=ACC

kub=ir undur=daan=kirii an-os-ko-n

boat=LOC insert=CO]=SIM INCH-PFV-PRT1-3SG

Putting a woman into a kitchen has become similar to [as difficult as] putting a donkey on a boat.

⇒ Women no longer want to work in the kitchen.

⇒ Society has changed.

⁹¹⁰ From Ordesse Hamed, Dibela; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, ‘Abd al-Rāziq Muḥammad, Aḥmad Sāti, Kamal Hussein, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

⁹¹¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 219); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

The saying describes modern times in which a woman can buy many items at the market that used to be homemade, such as bread.

A9.27 ⁹¹² *TĪNḐI EWĪPKĪRAN, KAḐLI KALLAN.*

tiinci ewirkiran, kajli kalkan.

tii-nci ewir-ki-r-an kaj-li kal-r-an
 cow-PL cultivate-COND-NEUT-3PL horse-PL eat-NEUT-3PL

When the cows cultivate, the horses eat.

⇒ While one works hard, another person takes away the fruit of his labour.

When put to work at a waterwheel a cow works hard to water the fields where the horse's fodder is growing.

A9.28 ⁹¹³ *TĪ TENN KOYḐE MENILLO NEḐWEMOYN.*

tii tenn kude menillo neewemun.

tii tenn kude menil=ro neewe-mun
 cow 3SG:POSSpen except=LOC have.rest-NEG

The cow does not have rest except in its pen.

⇒ Having rest anywhere in the world except in one's home country is impossible.

English: There's no place like home.

A9.29 ⁹¹⁴ *TIFḐĀRKEḐ TĪGI KŌL, ḐERIGKEḐ TĪNBĀBKĪ ELIN.*

tingaarked tiigi kool, sherigked tiinbaabki elin.

tingaar=ged tii=gi kool ...
 west=INS cow=ACC having

⁹¹² From ḐĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 9); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḑasan.

⁹¹³ From ḐĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 61).

⁹¹⁴ From ḐĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 67; and 2016: proverb 66); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Muḥṣafa Ḑājirtōd. In his 2016 edition Ḑāmid Khabīr replaces the Arabic loanword *sherig* by *maltinee*.

sherig=ged tiinbaab=gi el-in
 east=INS precious.pearl=ACC find-3SG

Having the cow on the west [side of the river], he finds the precious pearl on the east [side].

tiinbaab is a precious pearl that is part of the *jertiig*, a bracelet worn at the time of circumcision, at weddings, and during the seventh month of pregnancy. Also a pharaonic scarab beetle.⁹¹⁵ Note the wordplay. Literally it means ‘father of the cow’.

⇒ The fortune of a wealthy person will increase.

A9.30⁹¹⁶ *ΤῆΓΙ Βᾶδιλ ON, ΕΚΚΙ Βᾶδιλ.*

tii gi baajil on, ekki baajil.

tii=gi baaj-il on er=gi baaj-il
 cow=ACC write-PTC:IPF OPT 2SG=ACC write-PTC:IPF

He who wants to mark the cow, he marks you [also].

baaj here means branding a cow by fire. It is compared with a treatment by fire as performed by customary healers and explained in semantic domain 30 ‘Life, Calamities and Death’.

⇒ He uses the same methods for animals as for humans.

⇒ He asks God to provide him with good things, but does not want others to receive the good.

⇒ I curse what he is wanting to do.

English: What’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

A9.31⁹¹⁷ *Τῆ Κᾶββαρ Μενιλ, Γῆδι ᾶρ Καλλαν.*

tii kabbar menil, giidti aar k Allan.

⁹¹⁵ MASSENBAACH 1962: 104.

⁹¹⁶ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi; co-investigated with Thourya Muḥammad, mother of Rodwan Uthmān, Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

⁹¹⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 189); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Ḥamed.

tii kabbar men-il giid=gi aar kal-r-an
 cow hurry NEG-PTC:IPF fodder=ACC grab eat-NEUT-3PL

The cow that is not in a hurry, (other cows) grab and eat the fodder.

⇒ If one does not fend for oneself, others will come and take his possessions.

⇒ He is the other person's victim.

A9.32 ⁹¹⁸ *ΤῖΚῶλ ἸΝῆΝΝ ΟΓΙΔ ἈΝΙΝ.*

tiikool, ineenn ogij anin.

tii-kool in-een=n ogij an-in
 cow-ADJR 2SG:POSS-mother=GEN husband INCH-3SG

Having a cow, he becomes your mother's husband.

⇒ When borrowing one's freedom is lost, as the lender interferes in all kinds of matters.

Ḥāmid Khabīr adds a real-life application: Once a farmer lost his only cow that was needed to work the waterwheel. He did not want to borrow to buy himself another cow, as that would have meant giving up his freedom and may have resulted in his wife having to do chores for the cow's owner. Instead, he moved to another place where he found work. When asked about his home he said the above proverb.

A9.33 ⁹¹⁹ *Γᾶϊβν τῖ Γοῦρκι Οὐσκιν.*

gaayibn tii gurki uskin.

gaayib=n tii gur=gi uski-n
 absence=GEN cow bull=ACC give.birth-3SG

The cow of the absent [person] gives birth to the bull.

⁹¹⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 205); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

⁹¹⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 84; and 2016: proverb 83); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 65, is the same. Part of the explanation is taken from there.

- ⇒ The one absent from home for a long period has fewer children than others.
- ⇒ The one absent from home receives less than the person present as other people will take his rights.
- ⇒ He has bad luck.

A cow is worth more than a bull, as it provides milk and can birth a calf. That is why a farmer keeps a cow but sells the bull. If the owner is absent at the birth of a calf he does not know if other people are cheating him by exchanging a new born cow against a new born bull.

A9.34 ⁹²⁰ ΓΟΥΡ ΓĒΛΕ ΒᾠΔΟΟΚΙΝ, ΓΟΥΡ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕ ΔᾠΥΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

gur geele boodoskin, gur urumme duurmunu.

gur geele bood-os-ki-n...

bull red run-PFV-COND-3SG

gur urumme duur-munu

bull black reach-NEG

[Even] When the red bull has just [began to] run, the black bull cannot reach [it].

geele usually means the ‘red’ colour. Here it symbolises a ‘fire’.

urumme usually means the ‘black’ colour. Here it symbolises ‘smoke’.

- ⇒ The fire always precedes the smoke.

A9.35 ⁹²¹ ΓΟΥΡ ΔΙΓΙΡΚΙΝ, ΚΑΝΔΙ ΔΙΓΡῪ ἈΝΙΝ.

gur digirkin, kandi digrii anin.

⁹²⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 65); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. The proverb is missing in the 2016 edition. It is very similar to A9.13 and A22.29.

⁹²¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 66; and 2016: proverb 65); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltūd, Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza. Muḥammad Sharīf replaces *gur* by *kam*. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 219. It is one of the SCA proverbs where an earlier Aramaic proverb can be found (GOTEIN 1966: 373). The ECA idiom is discussed in MIEDER 2004: 89.

gur digir-ki-n kandi digrii an-in
 bull fall-COND-3SG knife much INCH-3SG

When the bull falls, the knives become plentiful.

gur signifies anybody who is capable of making his own decision and then carrying it out. In the proverb this ability is lost.

⇒ In a village when someone does something wrong everyone hears about it.

⇒ When someone important does something wrong, people attack him.

⇒ When a formerly strong and influential person gets into trouble, jealous people bring out all his weaknesses and problems.⁹²²

⇒ When a politician loses his job, his enemies will multiply.

SCA: .التور كان وقع، تكثر سكاكينو. – “When the bull has fallen, there are plenty of knives directed toward it.”

ECA: .لما البقرة تُقع، تكثر سكاكينها.
 “If the bull falls, the knives become plentiful.”

A9.36 ⁹²³ ΓΟΥΡ ΤΕΝΝ ΝΙΩΨΙΓΙ ΜᾶΜΟΥΝ.

gur tenn nishshigi maamun.

gur tenn nishshi=gi maa-mun
 bull 3SG:POSShorn=ACC be.not.able-NEG

The bull is unable [not to carry] its horn.

⇒ Everyone can endure his responsibilities.

A9.37 ⁹²⁴ ΕΡΟΝ ΓΟΥΡ ΒῸΔΙΛΓΙ ΝΙΩΨΙΡ ΤῸΝ ΕΚΚΙ ΟΥΨΟΥΡΜΕΝΚΙΝ,
 ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΧΑΡΤῸΥΜΙΡ ΔῸΥΜΕΝ!

⁹²² TAHA 2011; with revised orthography.

⁹²³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⁹²⁴ From Ahmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Nemat Abdalrahman, Samira El-Melik-Ziadah. The latter replaces *unyur* by *baar* meaning ‘If you cannot scratch the running bull at its horn, ...’.

*eron gur boodilgi nishshir toon eski unyurmenkin, tokkon
Khartumir juumen!*

er=on gur bood-il=gi ...
2SG=CO:COND bull run-PTC:IPF=ACC
nishshi=r toon eski unyur-men-ki-n ...
horn=LOC from be.able know-NEG-COND-2SG
tokkon Khartum=ir juur-men
IMP:NEG Khartoum=LOC go-IMP:NEG

If you do not know [how to grasp] a running bull by its horn,
just do not go to Khartoum!

(*n*)*ishshi* symbolises power and authority, as in Middle Eastern cultures the new king was anointed with oil poured from a horn. For contemporary Sudanese Nubians, Khartoum is the place where one meets people with such attributes.

⇒ In Khartoum one faces difficult situations. If one is not prepared, one is safer staying at home.

A9.38 ⁹²⁵ ΓΟΥΡ ΔΕΡΪΝΔΟ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ ΙΡΡΙΛ.

gur deriindo buun goon irril.

gur deriin=ro buu-n goon irri-il
bull residues.of.fodder=LOC lie-3SG SUB bellow-PTC:IPF
[He is like] The bull that bellows while lying in the residues of fodder.

⇒ He is a big mouth, yet does not do anything.

English: He is all talk.

A9.39 ⁹²⁶ CĀB AN TŌREGI, TE ΓΟΥΡ ΔNKON?

saab an tooregi, te gur ankon?

⁹²⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 182); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

⁹²⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 157); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza; as a variant Ḥāmid Khabīr replaces the connector *-egi* by the nominalizer NR *-ee*.

saab an toor-egi te gur an-ko-n
 cat INCH enter-PURP Q:PRED bull INCH-PRT1-3SG

He became a cat in order to enter, [and when] did he become a bull?

⇒ He changes his behaviour, first he pretends to be nice, later when he comes to power he behaves badly.

⇒ He behaves differently than he really is.

⇒ He has two faces.

English: A wolf in sheep's clothing.

A9.40 ⁹²⁷ *ΒΕΡΤΙΝ ΕΩΚΙΡΙΝ.*

bertin eewkiriin.

berti=n eew=kirii-n
 goat=GEN tail=SIM-COP

He is similar to the tail of the goat.

bertin eew The tail of a goat (unlike the tail of a sheep) is very short and does not cover any part of the body.

⇒ He is of no use, like the tail of the goat.

⇒ He is unreliable.

A9.41 ⁹²⁸ *ΒΟΥΤΤΟΥΛ ΤΙΝΕΝΓΕΔ ΑΜΜΙΔΤΙ ΚΟΥΡΙΝ.*

buttul tineenged ammiidti kuurin.

buttul tin-een=ged ammiid=gi ...
 male.goat 3SG:POSS-mother=INS leaping.of.goat=ACC
kuur-in
 learn-3SG

The male goat learns leaping with its mother.

⇒ A mother is very important. Each human being and every animal learns the first lessons from its mother.

⁹²⁷ From 'Abdullahi 'Uthmān, Irtide.

⁹²⁸ From 'Abdullahi 'Uthmān, Irtide; co-investigated with Samira El-Melik-Ziadah.

A9.42 ⁹²⁹ ΕΓΕΔΤΙ ΑΒΟΥΓΙΡ ΔΟΜΙΡΑΝ. ΜΙΓΓΙ ΔΩΙΝ?
egedit abugir jomiran. mingi aawin?
eged=gi abug=ir jom-r-an mingi aaw-in
 sheep=ACC wool=LOC beat-NEUT-3PL Q:ACC make-3SG
 They beat the sheep in [its] wool. What does it make?
 What is the point of beating a sheep with [its] thick woolly
 coat?

⇒ He does not mind when others talk negatively about him.
 English: He's thick-skinned.

A9.43 ⁹³⁰ ΕΓΕΔ ΒΕΪΪΚΑΤΤΙΝ ΑΤΤΙΡ ΤΕΓΙΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΑΖΑΚΕΔ ΒΕΪΪΝ.
eged beeyikattin attir teegil, tenn ahaked beyyin.
eged beyyi-katti=n attir teeg-il ...
 sheep bleat-skilful=GEN near stay-PTC:IPF
tenn ahaked beyyi-n
 3SG:POSS similar bleat-3SG
 The sheep that stays near the skilful bleating sheep, bleats
 similarly to it.

⇒ People copy others' behaviour.

A9.44 ⁹³¹ ΔΟΥΜΜΑΔΕ ΦΙΡΡΙΚΙΝ, ΤΟΥΔΔΙΓΙ ΦΟΥΤΕΜΟΥΝΟΥ.
dummade firrikin, tuddigi fuuteemunuu.
dummade firri-ki-n tuddi=gi fuutee-munu
 chicken fly-COND-3SG low.clay.wall=ACC escape.LV-NEG
 When a chicken flies, it does not escape over the low clay wall.
 ⇒ He tries to achieve yet he is not able to accomplish.
 English: He bites off more than he can chew.

⁹²⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 81; and 2016: proverb 80); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

⁹³⁰ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb.

⁹³¹ From Badr al-Dīn Jalāl, Magaasir Island; co-investigated with the family of Maḥmūd Sa'īd, Kamal Hussein.

M9.1 ⁹³² ΔΔΕΛ ΔΟΛΙΝΔΟ, ΓΑΡΡΙ ΤΕΝΝ ΟΥΡΤΙΝΔΟ.

adel dolindo, garri tenn urtindo.

adel dol-ndo ...

good loved.one-POSS

garri tenna urti-ndo

bad 3SG:POSS domestic.animal-POSS

The good belongs to the loved one, the bad belongs to his domestic animals.

doli

Usually ‘loved.one’ is *doliida*.⁹³³ I write *dolindo* as I heard it.

⇒

He takes good care of his friends; however, he does not care for his own family/household.

M9.2 ⁹³⁴ ΟΥΡΤΙΒΙ ΔΔΕΛΙ ΤΕΝΝ ΑΓΑΡΡΟ ΤΩΝ Ἄ ΒΕΛΜΙΝΑ.

urti adeli tenn agarro toon aa belmina.

urti-ci adel-i tenna agar=ro toon ...

domestic.animal-PL good-PL 3SG:POSS place=LOC from

aag bel-min-a

PROG exit-NEG-3PL

The good domestic animals do not leave their place.

⇒

Don’t marry someone from somewhere else, even if that person is considered to be good.

M9.3 ⁹³⁵ ΚΑΜΓΙ ΔἄΝ ΜΕΝΙΝ ΓΩΝ, ΙΡΡΙΓ ἄ ΔἄΝCOY.

kamgi jaan meenin goon, irrig aa jaansu.

⁹³² From St15; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthman; otherwise mainly unknown, even with Mattokki of above-average language competency.

⁹³³ MASSENBAACH 1933: 158.

⁹³⁴ From Muḥammad ‘Abdu, Toshke. While Muḥammad ‘Abdu is not a Mattokki, he lives in a village surrounded by Mattokki and picked the language up easily. Co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi.

⁹³⁵ From St2; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muḥammad Şubḥi, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

kam=gi jaan meen-in goon ...

camel=ACC buy be.not-3SG SUB

irri=gi aag jaan-s-u

rope=ACC PROG buy-PRT2-3SG

Before he buys the camel, he bought the bridle.

⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.

⇒ He performs the most important task last.

English: to count one's chickens before they are hatched / putting the cart before the horse

This and four proverbs hereafter (M9.10, M9.11, M9.12, M9.24) all have the same meaning. They are ways of mocking other people.

M9.4 ⁹³⁶ Γᾠρ Γᾠλιν, ἀγαρρο καμ ἄ διγίρ.

goor goolin, agarro kam aa digir.

goor gool-in agar=ro kam aag digir-∅

ant dig-3SG:SUB place=LOC camel PROG fall-3SG

The ant digs, the camel falls into the place [pit].

⇒ Don't despise someone of low status! He can influence someone of high status.

M9.5 ⁹³⁷ καμ τενν εἴῖεν ἀρβιτγ ἄ νάλμοϋνοϋ.

kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.

kam tenna eyye=na arbit=gi aag nal-munu

camel 3SG:POSS neck=GEN curve=ACC PROG see-NEG

The camel does not see the curve of its neck.

⇒ He is proud or arrogant for no reason.

⇒ He talks negatively about others while being worse.

⁹³⁶ From St3; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi.

⁹³⁷ From St75. Sayid al-Ḥasan replaces *arbit* by its variant *erbit*, Muḥammad Şubḥi by *berri* 'bent', Thābit Zāki by *kurum* 'hump', Zīzī Şiyām by *jer* 'back'.

⇒ One does not see one's own shame and mistakes, only that of others.

ECA:⁹³⁸ .الجمال يمشي و يحدف لورا يشوف عيوب الناس و عيوبه لا يرى.
 “The camel walks and sees the people’s fault yet does not see its own faults.”

M9.6 ⁹³⁹ *TIP kaδKON aīāΓONNawpe TĒBpa.*
tir kajkon ayyagonnawre teebra.
tir kaj=gon ayya=gon=nawre teeb-r-a
 3PL horse=CO snake=CO=SIM be-NEUT-3PL
 They are [behaving] similar to horse and snake.

⇒ They always fight each other.

English: like cat and mouse

M9.7 ⁹⁴⁰ *ḤANOYGI kaδN aΓaPPO BI DIGIPNa?*
hanugi kajn agarro bi digirna?
hanu=gi kaj=na agar=ro bi digir-na
 donkey=ACC horse=GEN place=LOC TAM bind-Q:NEUT
 Will you bind the donkey at the place of the horse?

⇒ You exchange something valuable for something of less value.

⇒ You put the weak one at the place of the strong one.

The proverb can be said in different situations, like:

- Someone gives up their job to take another, lower-paid job.
- Someone divorces a beautiful wife and marries an ugly one.

⁹³⁸ Muḥammad ‘Ali p.c., points out that in order to maintain the rhythm the final word is in MSA.

⁹³⁹ From St40; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. The proverb has the same meaning and structure as M11.5.

⁹⁴⁰ From St13; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Sha‘bān Berber, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān; variant from Muḥammad Mīrghani.

- Someone who is married to a good wife wants to divorce her and marry another woman.
- Villagers pressure a widow to remarry. She says the proverb to refuse.

variant *kajn agarro hanugi aawri minna?*

Why do you make the donkey at the place of the horse?

M9.8 ⁹⁴¹ *ΚΑΔΙΚΩΛ ΖΑΝΟΥΓ Ᾱ ΕΓΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kajikool hanug aa egirmunu.

kaj-i-kool hanu=gi aag egir-munu

horse-PL-ADJR donkey=ACC PROG ride-NEG

The one having horses, he does not ride on a donkey.

⇒ The wealthy person can have anything he wants.

In the ‘Sha‘bān’ teahouse in the popular Atarīn district of Alexandria one customer quoted the proverb meaning that a wealthy man who has sufficient money to drink tea in the Sheraton hotel would not frequent the ‘Sha‘bān’ teahouse.

M9.9 ⁹⁴² *ΚΑΣ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕ ΒΩΔΚΙΝ, ΚΑΣ ΓΕ̄ΛΕ ΤΕΚΚΙ ΔΟΥΡΜΙΝΟΥ.*

kaj urumme boodkin, kaj geele tekki duurminu.

kaj urumme bood-ki-n ...

horse black run-COND-3SG

kaj geele ter=gi duur-minu

horse red 3SG=ACC reach-NEG

When the black horse runs, the red horse cannot reach it.

urumme usually means the ‘black’ colour. Here it symbolises ‘smoke’.

geele usually means the ‘red’ colour. Here it symbolises a ‘fire’.

⇒ The smoke is always reaching further than the fire.

Besides being a proverb, it is also regarded as a riddle. When uttered the listeners has to find out what the ‘black horse’ and the ‘red horse’ means.

⁹⁴¹ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

⁹⁴² From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island.

M9.10 ⁹⁴³ *καδκι δᾶN με, λιδαMΓI δᾶNCOY?*
kajki jaan me, lijaamgi jaansu?
kaj-gi jaan me lijaam=gi jaan-s-u
 horse=ACC buy Q:NEG:FOC bridle=ACC buy-PRT2-2SG
 Isn't it [that] you bought the horse, [and afterwards] you
 bought the bridle?

⇒ He does his tasks in the wrong order.

variant *kajki jaan meenin goon, lijaamgi jaasu.*
 Before he buys the horse, he buys the bridle.

M9.11 ⁹⁴⁴ *ζᾶNOYΓI ἈΤΤᾶN ἘΤΤO, ΔΕΓIΡΚI ΕΒΒIΔᾶCOY.*
hanugi attan etto, degirki ebbidaasu.
hanu=gi attar=na etto ...
 [donkey=ACC bring]=GEN SUB
degir=gi ebbidaa-s-u
 saddle=ACC bring-PRT2-3SG

Before bringing the donkey, he brought the saddle.

⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.

⇒ He performs the second step first.

⇒ He does not have money yet he is showing off to people.

M9.12 ⁹⁴⁵ *ζᾶNOYΓI ΕΓIΡ ΜῘNIN ΓᾶN, OCCIG ᾶ ωᾶᾶΓI.*
hanugi egir meenin goon, ossig aa walagi.
hanu=gi egir meen-in goon ...
 donkey=ACC ride be.not-3SG SUB
ossi=gi aag walag-i
 leg=ACC PROG shake-3SG

⁹⁴³ From Ḥajja ‘Atiāt Šābr, Debood; variant from Khālid Karār.

⁹⁴⁴ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Thābit Zāki replaces *ebbidaasu* with *yaa kaashe* ‘he searches for’.

⁹⁴⁵ From St1; co-investigated with and repeated by Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Mekki Muḥammad, Khālid Karār, Muḥarrām Maḥmūd, Khayriya Mūsa.

Although he rides a donkey, he shakes the leg.

ossi walag The rider shakes the leg against the donkey making it start moving.

⇒ He does his tasks in the wrong order.

⇒ He does not have money yet he is showing off to people.

⇒ He talks a lot before doing anything.

⇒ He is in too much of a hurry.

The proverb can be said in different circumstances, like:

- A pregnant woman goes to a silversmith and asks him to make a protective amulet against the ‘evil eye’ for a girl before she knows for sure that it will be a girl.
- Someone buys a new computer before learning how to use one.
- Someone buys a new tie before he buys a new suit.

English: putting the cart before the horse

M9.13 ⁹⁴⁶ *ḶANOYGI CIKAGI AMITTIRKI, AḶOYΔANΔIG ā ḶOY.*

hanugi sikagi amittirki, aguudandig aa juu.

hanu=gi sika=gi amit-tir-ki ...

donkey=ACC way=ACC show-2/3REC-COND

aguude-ndi=gi aag juu-Ø

alone-POSS=ACC PROG go-3SG

When you show a donkey the way, it goes it by itself.

⇒ A donkey is cleverer than you.

⇒ Even a simple person can learn something.

⇒ As you have not listened you do not understand.

variant *hanugi girki amittirki, ter koolan bi juu.*

If you show a donkey the way, it will go by itself.

⁹⁴⁶ From Hanā Ṣalāh, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, Dunya ‘Abd al-Fataḥ; variant from Magdi Maḥmūd.

M9.14 ⁹⁴⁷ *ḶANOY, TENN ΔΦΦΙΒΙΝΑ ΔΟΡΟ, ΜΙΤΑΡΡΟ ΔΙΓΙΡ ΤΟ̄COY.*

hanu, tenn afficina jooro, mitarro digir toosu.

hanu tenna affi-ci=na jooro ...

donkey 3SG:POSSchild-PL=GEN CAUS

mitar=ro digir toor-s-u

well=LOC fall enter-PRT2-3SG

The donkey, because of its children [ass colts], jumped into the well.

⇒ A mother loves her children so much that she is willing to sacrifice anything and to face danger because of them.

⇒ When love goes too far it becomes stupid.

English: Love is blind.

M9.15 ⁹⁴⁸ *EP ΔOȲ TĀN BOKON, ḶANOYN NIΩΩI BI BĒPI.*

er juu taan bokon, hanun nishshi bi beeri.

er juur taar=n bokon ...

[2SG go come]=GEN SUB

hanu=na nishshi bi beer-i

donkey=GEN horn TAM grow-3SG

By the time you leave and return, the donkey's horn will have grown.

(n)ishshi While in ancient Middle Eastern cultures the horn was a symbol for power, here growing a horn signifies something impossible.

⇒ You are lazy.

⇒ You talk about leaving and acting, however, you stay.

⁹⁴⁷ From St25; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi, Thābit Zāki. Muḥammad Gum'a replaces *affici* by *farah* 'small (one)'. Besides the mother, the metaphor can also refer to (in this order) the father, the brother and sister, any family member, a friend, any good man or woman.

⁹⁴⁸ From Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz, West Aswan; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ; variant from Fatḥi 'Abd al-Sayid.

⇒ You talk about returning shortly, however, everyone knows that you will take much longer.

English: Hell will freeze over before ...⁹⁴⁹

variant *er ingi aawin bokon, hanun nishshi bi beeri.*

By the time you have done this, the donkey's horn will have grown.

M9.16 ⁹⁵⁰ *ΖΑΝΟΥΝ ΝΙΩΨΙ ΒΕΛΙ ΜΟΥΚΚΟΜΝΟΥ.*

hanun nishshi beli mukkoomnu.

hanu=*na* *nishshi* *bel-i* *muk-koo-munu*

donkey=GEN horn exit-3SG grow.out-PRT1-NEG

The donkey's horn did not come out and grow out.

⇒ This is impossible.

⇒ He has little brain. As he does not understand the matter there is no need to explain it to him.

⇒ His action is meaningless and useless.

⇒ He behaves most peculiarly.

When uttering the proverb Mattokki omit the negation, shortening *mukkoomnu* to *mukko*. It seems to be understood as usually the suffix *-koo* occurs with the negative suffix only.

variant *hanuna nishshi belki.*

If the donkey's horn comes out.

M9.17 ⁹⁵¹ *ΑΛΑΓΙΔΕ ΖΑΝΟΥΝ ΝΙΩΨΙ ΒΕΡΟCCΟΥ.*

alagiide hanun nishshi beerossu.

⁹⁴⁹ www.oysterenglish.com/idiom-until-hell-freezes-over.html [last accessed on 1 December 2023]

⁹⁵⁰ From Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with women from Dehemiit (A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad 'Uthman. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 271.

⁹⁵¹ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab.

alagiide hanu=na nishshi beer-os-s-u
 just.now donkey=GEN horn grow-PFV-PRT2-3SG

-os-s

alagiide contradicts the PFV suffix (-os). Marking it with the PRT2 suffix only (-s) would fit better, also in the next proverb.⁹⁵²

Just now the donkey's horn grew.

⇒

You said something puzzling.

⇒

What you said is impossible.

M9.18⁹⁵³ *αλαγίδε ζάνου αγγαλλέγι καλοσσοϋ.*

alagiide hanu angalleegi kalossu.

alagiide hanu angallee=gi kal-os-s-u
 just.now donkey white.lupin=ACC eat-PFV-PRT2-3SG

Just now the donkey ate [finished eating] the white lupin.

angallee

A donkey never eats the white lupin.

⇒

He has done something unexpected / very strange.

⇒

He is not clever yet has done something really smart.

⇒

He takes a right that does not belong to him.

⇒

What you are saying is not possible.

M9.19⁹⁵⁴ *ερ αδδερ ζάνουωερκι ουνδουροϋς!*

er adder hanuweerki undurus!

er ay-der hanu=weer=gi undur-us
 2SG 1SG-REC donkey=INDF=ACC insert-IMP:POL:SG

You insert a donkey for me!

⇒

You are better than I.

⁹⁵² As commented by Asmaa A. Kenawy 2022, p.c. For a further discussion of that grammatical construction see MASSENBACH (1934: 134). Asmaa A. Kenawy replaces *alagiide* by the local variant *allegiide*.

⁹⁵³ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi. Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir drops the first word *alagiide*.

⁹⁵⁴ From Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi, ‘Amm Sali’s wife.

⇒ 1:0. You won the game.

In one popular Nubian game date kernels were used as chips for playing. The one who moved his date kernels first to the final place won. Others said the proverb.

M9.20 ⁹⁵⁵ *ḤANOYḠON CIAṬIFI MŌNOCKŌ.*

hanugon siltigi moonoskoo.

hanu=gon silti=gi moon-os-koo

donkey=CO chaff=ACC reject-PFV-PRT1

And the donkey has rejected the chaff.

silti

While a cow gets good fodder, a donkey is expected to eat everything. Chaff is considered the worst food for a donkey.

⇒ This is refused by everyone.

⇒ You have given something very bad.

M9.21 ⁹⁵⁶ *ΔΕΓΙΡΝΑ ΚΟΥΔΕΡΑΡ, ΑΛΛΟΥΓΚΙ ΜΙΓΓΙ ΒΙ ἄΩΙ?*

degirna kujerar, alluugki mingi bi aawi?

degir=na kuje-rar ...

saddle=GEN get.up-NR

alluug=gi mingi bi aaw-i

clover=ACC Q:ACC TAM make-3SG

The one getting up the saddle (i.e. the rider), doesn't he prepare the clover [first]?

⇒ A child needs to be raised well to be useful in future.

M9.22 ⁹⁵⁷ *ἰᾶ ḶΕΡΙ, ἰᾶ ΔἰΒΑ!*

yaa heri, yaa diiba!

⁹⁵⁵ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

⁹⁵⁶ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. Compare A7.5 that has similar meaning.

⁹⁵⁷ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi.

Either speed up, or stay!

heri goads for getting a donkey to speed up
diiba a Nubian dance move in which the dancer remains on the spot
while swinging the hands up and down.

⇒ He is middle-of-the-road.

In itself, the wording of the proverb is not meaningful. That is why I do not gloss it.

M9.23 ⁹⁵⁸ *ṭīḅi āwraṅgi ḡanoʊwi ā kaḷḷa.*

tiici aawrangi hanuwi aa kalla.

ti-ci *aaw-ran=gi* *hanu-wi* *aag kal-r-a*
[*cow-PL make-INF*]=ADV *donkey-PL* PROG eat-NEUT-3PL

After the cows worked, the donkeys eat.

⇒ He is doing something stupid that causes laughter.

⇒ While I do something good for him, he only enjoys it and does nothing for me. He even talks negatively about me.

When put to work at a waterwheel a cow works hard to water the fields where the clover is growing that the donkey will eat later.

M9.24 ⁹⁵⁹ *ṭī ḡān mēnin ḡōn, irriḡ ā kāʊpa.*

tii jaan meenin goon, irrig aa kaashra.

ti=∅ *jaan meen-in goon ...*

cow=ACC *buy be.not-3SG* SUB

irri=gi *aag kaashe-r-a*

rope=ACC PROG search-NEUT-3PL

⁹⁵⁸ From Muḥammad Ajīb, Gurte; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

⁹⁵⁹ From St46; variants from MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI / A. GOO-GRAUER and Muḥarram Maḥmūd. Fathī ‘Abd al-Sayid replaces *kaashe* by *koshki* ‘to sew’. Instead of *irri* the Mattokki students use *teel* that to the research participants is unknown. – In villages depending on the waterwheel and the cow connected to it this proverb was preferred to M9.3, M9.10, M9.11, and M9.12. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 178, where ‘cow’ is replaced by the ‘donkey’.

Before they buy a cow, they search for the rope.

- ⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.
 ⇒ He does the unimportant task first and then the important one.
 ⇒ He acts in haste.

variant *tiigi atta meenin goon, irrig aa iiri.*
 Before he brings the cow, he makes the rope.

variant *tiigi atta meenin goon, irrig aa jaani.*
 Before he brings the cow, he buys the rope.

M9.25 ⁹⁶⁰ *Τῆρι Δοῖκίρα, ωἄλγι Ουσκι.*

tiigi doykira, waalgi uski.

ti=gi *do*-ki-r-a ...

cow=ACC bring.up-COND-NEUT-3PL

waal=gi *uski*-Ø

calf=ACC give.birth-3SG

When they bring up the cow, it gives birth to a calf.

- ⇒ The one who prepares well achieves a good result.
 English: One step at a time.

M9.26 ⁹⁶¹ *Τῆ τεννα ωἄλγ ἄ δακκίμνοϋ.*

tii tenna waalg aa jakkimnu.

ti *tenna* *waal*=gi *aag* *jakki-munu*

cow 3SG:POSScalf=ACC PROG kick-NEG

The cow does not beat its calf.

- ⇒ Parents should not hit their children.
 ⇒ Mothers are too kind to beat their children.

⁹⁶⁰ From women from Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

⁹⁶¹ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

Before the *hijra*, it is said that Nubian parents and especially mothers rarely beat their children. Only uncles and cousins, also sometimes fathers, hit the children; however, most of the time one glance was sufficient.

M9.27 ⁹⁶² ΓΟΥΡ ΔΙΓΙΡΚΙΝ, ΚΑΝΔΙ ἄ ΔΙΓΡΪ ἈΝΙ.

gur digirkin, kandi aa digrii ani.

gur digir-ki-n kandi aag digrii an-i
 bull fall-COND-3SG:SUB knife PROG much INCH-3SG

When the bull falls, the knives become plentiful.

kandi digrii When a bull is slaughtered, many Nubians stand ready, each with a knife, to separate the meat from the other parts of the body and cut it into pieces.

⇒ When someone does something wrong, people attack him.

⇒ When a formerly famous or influential person gets into trouble, envious people bring their weaknesses and problems to light.

ECA: .لما البقرة تُقع، تكثر سكاكينها.

“If the cow falls, the knives become plentiful.”

English advising the opposite: Don’t kick a person when he is down.

M9.28 ⁹⁶³ ΒΕΡΤΙΓΟΝ ΣΑΜΕΕ ΚΟ.

bertigon saamee koo.

berti=gon saamee koor-Ø
 goat=CO whisker have-3SG

And the goat has a whisker.

saame A beard or a whisker is a distinctive mark. When a woman brags that her father has a beard, the other women respond with the above saying.

⁹⁶² From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Sharīf ‘Abd al-Min‘am. The ECA idiom is discussed in MIEDER 2004: 89.

⁹⁶³ From St34 where *eged* is used instead of *berti*; co-investigated with Khālid Karār, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

⇒ He is not modest.

M9.29 ⁹⁶⁴ ΕΚΚΙ ΔΟΪCIN ΔΟΓῸΡ ΒΕΡΤΙΩΕΡΚΙ ΔΟΪΚῸΚΙΡΙ ΓΕΝCΟΥ.

ekki doysin dogoor bertiweerki doykookiri gensu.

er=gi doy-s-i=na dogoor ...

[2SG=ACC bring.up-PRT2-1SG]=GEN COMP

berti=weer=gi *doy-koo-ki-r-i* ...

goat=INDF=ACC bring.up-PRT1-COND-NEUT-1SG

gen-s-u

better-PRT2-3SG

If I [had] raised a goat it would have been better than raising you.

⇒ Children listen to their parents when they are young. After having grown up they do what they want. However, they should not do so.

⇒ You whom I love so much, reject me.

⇒ I feel sorry for doing something.

M9.30 ⁹⁶⁵ ΕΓΕΔ ΕΓΕΔΚΟΔΟ ᾶ ΤΑΪΝΙ. ΒΕΡΤΙΓΟΝ ΒΕΡΤΙΓΟΔΟ ᾶ ΤΑΪΝΙ.

eged egedkodo aa tayni. bertigon bertigodo aa tayni.

eged **eged**=godon *aag tayn-i* ...

sheep sheep=COM PROG go-3SG

berti=gon **berti**=godon *aag tayn-i*

goat=CO goat=COM PROG go-3SG

A sheep walks with a sheep. And a goat walks with a goat.

eged refers to a stupid person.

berti refers to a person of little knowledge or an idiot.

⇒ An evil person walks with an evil person.

⁹⁶⁴ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli, Muḥammad Šubḥi.

⁹⁶⁵ From Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz, West Aswan. Muḥammad Jabāli replaces *tayni* with the synonym *talle*.

⇒ He is haughty.

M9.31 ⁹⁶⁶ *ΤΕΡ ΔΑΡΒΑΔ ΓΑΣΚΑΤΤΙΓΙ ΚΑΓΙΛΝΑΩΡΕ ΤΕΒΑΡΚΙ ΜΩΝ ΒΟΥ.*

ter darbad gaskattigi kaagilnawre teebarki moon buu.

ter darbad gaskatti=gi kaag-il=nawre ...

3SG chicken egg=ACC carry-PTC:IPF=SIM

teeb-ar=gi moon buu-Ø

stop-NR=ACC reject PROG-3SG

He, similar to a chicken that carries an egg, refused to stop.

St. transl.: The chicken that has an egg does not stop its movement.

⇒ He is always nervous and anxious.

English: like a cat on hot bricks

M9.32 ⁹⁶⁷ *ΤΕΡ ΜΕ ΔΑΡΒΑΔΙΝΑΩΡΕ ἄ ΦΙΝΔΙ?*

ter me darbadinawre aa findi?

ter me darbad-i=nawre aag findi-Ø

3SG Q:NEG:FOC chicken-PL=SIM PROG peck-3SG

Isn't it that he pecks similar to a chicken?

findi The consonant *f* is unusual in Mattokki. *bitti* has similar meaning.

⇒ He is moving around restlessly and without sense of direction.

⇒ He lurches from one problem to the next.

variant *darbad nawikke aridg aa findi.*

Like a chicken, he pecks the ground.

⁹⁶⁶ From St44; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ. *Zīzī Şiyām* replaces the root *teebarki* by *teegarki*: 'staying'. Its ACC clitic can be replaced by the INS clitic: *teebar=ged*.

⁹⁶⁷ From St43; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki; variant from Āisha 'Abd al-Rāziq.

M9.33 ⁹⁶⁸ ΔΑΡΒΑΔΝ ΟCΣΙΓΙ ΚΑΛ ΒΟΪ.

darbadn ossigi kal buu.

darbad=na *ossi=gi kal buu-Ø*
 chicken=GEN leg=ACC eat PROG-3SG

He eats the chicken leg.

darbad Chickens are known for constantly moving round, never resting at one place.

⇒ He moves restlessly like a chicken.

⇒ He is a wealthy person who has eaten a lot.

variant *darbadn ossigi kalee daa.*

He is eating the chicken leg.

The proverb can be said to a child in the following context:

urre teebu, er darbadn ossigi kal buuna?

Stop treading, have you eaten a chicken's leg?

M9.34 ⁹⁶⁹ ΟΥΡ ΦΑΒΒΙ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΕΩΓΕΔ ΜΙΝ ΔΩ?

ur facci buun goon, eewged min aaw?

ur facci buu-n goon eew=ged min aaw-Ø
 head crush STAT-3SG SUB tail=INS Q make-3SG

The head is crushed, what [can] he do with the tail?

⇒ He is defeated yet does not admit it.

⇒ He is poor yet behaves like a wealthy person.

⇒ He is arrogant.

variant *ur facci buun goon, eewged mingi bi aawi/aawru?*

The head is crushed, what will you (SG)/we/you (PL) do with the tail?

⁹⁶⁸ From Muḥammad Mīrghani, Debood; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’s sister; variant from KHAYRIA MŪSA. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 261.

⁹⁶⁹ From Zahra, Elephantine Island; written down by A. Goo-Grauer; co-investigated with Ḥajja ‘Atiāt Šābr, Thābit Zāki; variants from Fayza and Muḥammad Šubḥi.

variant *ur facci buun goon, eewged aa fatti.*
 Although the head is crushed, he waggles the tail.

4.10. Non-domesticated Animals in and around the House

The Nile Valley is the habitat of many non-domesticated animals like cats (*saab*), mice (*kuguj/iskitte*) and dogs (*wel*). Among the Mattokki cats were treated “with respect, since cats purportedly belonged to the world of spirits and could therefore inflict harm if mishandled.”⁹⁷⁰

In spite of being considered good swimmers dogs usually do not cross the river Nile and reach the islands, except at low-tide when they cross over in the darkness. The Mattokki felt especially close to their dogs whom at the *hijra* they wanted to take with them, but were not permitted to do so. When they later came along a deserted village they heard the howling of the dogs left behind who could not find any food. Tears came to their eyes.⁹⁷¹

The chameleon (*nonga/nongee*) is not dangerous, but it frightens people as it turns up unexpectedly. All sorts of supernatural powers are attributed to it.⁹⁷² While the fly (*kulti*) occurs everywhere in Nubia and can become a nuisance, it is missing in Andaandi proverbs, being mentioned only in Mattokki proverbs.

A10.1 ⁹⁷³ *CĀB IṢṢIGI ΔOYPE MĀKIN, NΔΔΔIN, EN.*
saab iccigi duure maakin, naddin, en.
saab icci=gi duur-e maa-ki-n ...
 cat milk=ACC reach-be be.not.able-COND-3SG

⁹⁷⁰ GOO-GRAUER forthcoming.

⁹⁷¹ Khālid Karār 2019, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2019, p.c. It is a common topic when Egyptian Nubians who experienced the *hijra* talk about it.

⁹⁷² Maḥmūd Sa’īd’s wife 2014, p.c.; MASSENBAACH 1935: 11.

⁹⁷³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 51) and TAHA 2011; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. *e maa* is analysed according to EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015: 104-105. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 275. The MSA idiom is taken from BURCKHARDT 2012[1875]: proverb 654. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 196.

naddi-n e-n

sour-3SG say-3SG

When the cat fails to reach the milk, it says: “It is sour.”

- ⇒ He likes criticising others.
 ⇒ He always finds an excuse for not doing anything.
 ⇒ Don’t give up or withdraw from a particular situation when the goal seems unattainable or difficult to achieve.

Aesop’s fables may be placed in Nubia. In one fable a fox cannot reach some grapes, so he turns away saying: “Those grapes are much too green and too sour”.⁹⁷⁴ The fox’s conclusion is similar to two Arabic proverbs:

MSA: من لا يصل للعنقود يقول عليه حاهض. – “The one who cannot reach to the bunch of grapes, says of it, ‘It is sour.’”

SCA: الكديس لما ما لحق اللحم قال عفن.
 “When the cat could not get the meat, it said it was rotten.”

A10.2 ⁹⁷⁵ *CĀB TENN COPHYGI OYNΔOYPMENIN ĠŌN, AĠARPO TŌN.*

saab tenn sorinygi undurmenin goon, agarro toon.

saab tenn soriny=gi undur-men-in goon ...

cat 3SG:POSS nose=ACC insert-NEG-3SG SUB

agar=ro toor-n

place=LOC enter-3SG

The cat before inserting its nose, it enters into the place.

- ⇒ Before entering a new situation check whether there will be a problem.

The proverb describes an irrational behaviour: any cat before entering a new place checks whether it is dangerous or not.

⁹⁷⁴ AESOP 1993: 108. Cf. LOBBAN 2002.

⁹⁷⁵ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muṣṭafa Samiltod, ‘Abd al-Hādi Mekki. The second one replaces *soriny* by the Arabic loanword *shanab* meaning ‘moustache’. The last one negates the verb *toon* as *toomnu* thereby making the cat’s behaviour rational.

A10.3 ⁹⁷⁶ *CĀBKI* *ΩΟΥΚΡĒKIN*, *BOY* *ΜΑΓΑC* *ANIN*.

saabki shukreekin, bu magas anin.

saab=gi shukree-ki-n *bi* *magas* *an-in*
 cat=ACC thank.LV-COND-2SG TAM thief INCH-3SG

When you thank the cat, it will become a thief.

- ⇒ Don't give anyone more than he deserves.
- ⇒ Don't trust that person!

A10.4 ⁹⁷⁷ *KOYΓΟΥC* *ΔΙΓΡĪ* *KOYΛΓI* *ΩΑΔΔΙΜΟΥΝ*.

kuguj digrii kulgi waddimun.

kuguj *digrii kul=gi* *waddi-mun*
 mouse many hole=ACC dig-NEG

Many mice do not dig the hole.

- ⇒ Many hands do not necessarily produce more.
- ⇒ This work can be done by one person.
- ⇒ Everyone assumes that this job is done by someone else. As a result, nobody does the work.
- ⇒ You are lazy.

English: Too many cooks spoil the broth.

A working party needs a good foreman who organises the work and motivates the workers. Without such a foreman the work done will be minimal.

⁹⁷⁶ From AMNA MUŞTAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. Hishām Bashīr puts the subordinate clause into 3PL, meaning ‘If they thank the cat’.

⁹⁷⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 113; and 2016: proverb 111); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Faṭhiya Ḥajj Ḥamed, Hishām Bashīr, also in ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 6 with slightly different spelling. A18.1 has a similar meaning. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 32, is the same.

A10.5 ⁹⁷⁸ *ΩΕΛ ΣΟΥΜΑΡΚΙΛ, ΔΟΥΓΓΟΥΡΚΙ ΟΥΣΚΙΝ.*

wel sumarkil, dungurki uskin.

wel sumarki-il dungur=gi uski-n

dog be.in.hurry-PTC:IPFblind=ACC give.birth-3SG

The dog that is in a hurry gives birth to a blind [poppy].

⇒ Don't rush!

⇒ Be patient (e.g. when choosing a bride), otherwise you will regret it.

⇒ Haste results in sorrow, but in carefulness there is peace.

English: Haste makes waste.

variant *wel sumarkiregi, dungurki uskin.*

The dog in order to hurry up, gives birth to a blind [poppy].

A10.6 ⁹⁷⁹ *ΙΨΑΡΕ ΚΟΥΣ ΒΟΥΛΓΙ, ΩΕΛΛΙ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΓΑΨΙΡΑΝ.*

ishare kus buulgi, welli malle gaanyiran.

ishare kus buu-il=gi ...

clay.vessel open STAT-PTC:IPF=ACC

wel-li malle gaany-r-an

dog-PL all lick-NEUT-3PL

The opened clay vessel, all the dogs lick [it].

ishare is a clay vessel used for fermenting milk to yogurt.

⇒ A poor person is open to any kind of abuse.

⁹⁷⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 26; and 2016: proverb 25; with *malle* omitted in the latter); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah; variant from Hāmīd Khabīr. While ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 182, has both a long *aa* (*sumaarki*) and a short *a*, Hāmīd Khabīr confirms the short *a*. Also in www.iqraweb.net/~حکم-و-أمثال [حکم-و-أمثال](http://www.iqraweb.net/~حکم-و-أمثال) [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 83, is the same. The last interpretation is taken from there.

⁹⁷⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 129; and 2016: proverb 127); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, Maḥmūd Sa‘īd’s wife.

- ⇒ One's belongings must be kept safe, otherwise they will be taken away.
- ⇒ Don't walk on your own as a woman!
- ⇒ She is an immoral woman who walks on her own at night.
- ⇒ She has a bad reputation and will end up promiscuous.

While a man or a woman may say the proverb it only refers to a woman, as in the following situation: A mother from the Dongola Reach living in the diaspora and her daughter planned a journey to their home village with the daughter wanting to stay on after her mother's return to the diaspora. Her mother responded by saying the proverb. On a previous visit even she as an elderly woman had a male guardian.

A10.7 ⁹⁸⁰ *ΩΕΛΓΙ Ε̄ΩΚΟΝ, ΤΕΝΝ Ε̄ΩΓΙ Ε̄ΩΙΝ.*

welgi eewkon, tenn eewgi eewin.

wel=gi eew-ko-n tenn eew=gi eew-in
 dog=ACC send-PRT1-3SG 3SG:POSS tail=ACC send-3SG

He sent the dog, [the dog] sends its tail.

eew As in other proverbs around the world, the tail stands for a subordinate or follower.⁹⁸¹ There is a word play between the two meanings of *eew* 'tail' and 'to send'.

- ⇒ The task you gave someone was passed on to someone else.

Proverb A20.9 goes one step further. It describes the consequences of sending someone else.

A10.8 ⁹⁸² *ΑΡΓΟΝ ΒΙ ΑΔΕΜ ΑΝΔΟΥ, ΩΕΛΛΙΓΟΝ ΑΡΓΙ ΒΙ ΟῩΚΚΙΡΑΝ.*

argon bi adem andu, welligon argi bi uukkiran.

⁹⁸⁰ From Muṣṭafa Samiltood, Agade.

⁹⁸¹ KRICKMANN 2001: 43.

⁹⁸² From Tāriq 'Abd al-Latīf, Shaikh Shariif; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Latīf Sid Aḥmad. The proverb can be said with any pronoun (any person, any number, 1SG to 3PL).

ar=gon bi adem an-r-u ...
 1PL=CO TAM human INCH-NEUT-1PL
wel-li=gon ar=gi bi uukki-r-an
 dog-PL=CO 1PL=ACC TAM bark-NEUT-3PL

We will become a [rich, important] human, and the dogs will bark at us.

- ⇒ Currently we are not important, Insha'Allah that will change and all people will notice us.
- ⇒ He has gained riches and does not greet the people anymore.

A10.9 ⁹⁸³ *NOFFA KABACIP ΔΑΡΡΕΛ.*

nonga kabasir darrel.

nonga kabas=ir darri-el
 chameleon <place.in.mosque>=LOC get.up-PTC:PF

[He is like] The chameleon that climbed up to the *kabas*.

kabas is a shelf in the mosque where wooden tablets with *Qur'ānic* texts are kept.

- ⇒ He adapted himself to fit the situation.

M10.1 ⁹⁸⁴ *CĀBKĪ KOYCOYN ΔΟΓ̄ΟΡ ΖΑΡΑΚΚΙΡΣΑ.*

saabki kusun dogoor haraskirsa.

saab=gi kusu=na dogoor haras-gir-s-a
 cat=ACC meat=GEN above watch-CAUS-PRT2-3PL

They caused the cat to watch over the meat.

- ⇒ The wrong person has been chosen for the job.

⁹⁸³ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 95; and 2016: proverb 94); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

⁹⁸⁴ From St23; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz; first variant from Jabāli Ajīb and 'Adīla Sulaymān; second variant from 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Abd al-Qādir. Zīzī Ṣiyām replaces the loanword *haraskirsa* by the Nubian word *ebirsa*. 'Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad adds a final suffix *-nde* transforming the proverb into a rhetorical question: 'Can you believe it, they caused the cat to watch over the meat.' The variant by a young speaker is shorter than the older version.

⇒ The item borrowed has not been returned.

ECA: . مَيِّكُوا القَط مَفْتاح الكَرَار .

“They gave the cat the key of the pantry.”

English: poacher turned gamekeeper

variant *saabki kusur hariskirsa.*

They caused the cat to watch the meat-place.

variant *saabki kusur hariskirme!*

Do not make the cat to watch the meat-place!

M10.2 ⁹⁸⁵ *CĀBKI ENN OYŪŪI ΔΑΩĀ ΜΑΝΔΟ ΑΝΓΑ, ΓŌΛΙΓΙ ΚΟΥΥΡΙCOY.*

saabki enn unyi dawaa mando anga, gooligi kunyisu.

saab-gi enna unyi dawaa ...

cat=ACC 2SG:POSS excrement medicine

man=ro an=gad gool=gi kunyi-s-u

[DEM=LOC say]=CAUS dig=ADV bury-PRT2-3SG

[He said to] the cat ‘your excrement is medicine’. When he said that after digging, he buried [it].

⇒ He is mean and not sharing what would help others, especially his relatives.

⇒ He heard that somebody else needs something from him and then went into hiding so that he does not have to share.

Sharing one’s belongings with relatives and friends is one of the main pillars of Sudanese societies. However, not everyone wants to fulfil that task.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸⁵ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island. ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim replaces *dawaa* by the loanword *ghaali* ‘expensive’.

⁹⁸⁶ That also applies to other societies, e.g. in Latin America. For a more detailed description see MARANZ 2001.

M10.3 ⁹⁸⁷ *CĀB TENN OYĪGI GŌΛKa ā KIΔΔIPi.*

saab tenn uyigi goolka aa kiddiri.

saab tenna unyi=gi gool-ka ...

cat 3SG:POSSexcrement=ACC dig-CO

aag kiddi-ir-i

PROG drown-PL:OBJ-3SG

The cat is used to dig and drown [bury] its excrement.

⇒

You are human; however, you never clean up.

M10.4 ⁹⁸⁸ *CĀBKON ĒωIP TŌN OYPPED āGIN GŌN, TALLĒCāN
KĒΛLO NāωωANΔIPi āωCOY.*

*saabkon eewir toon urred aagin goon, talgeesan keello
nawwandigi aawsu.*

saab=gon eew=ro toon urri-ed aag-in goon ...

cat=CO tail=LOC from tread-PFV PROG-3SG SUB

talgee-s-a=n keello ...

[let.go-PRT2-3PL]=GEN as.soon.as

nawwandi=gi aaw-s-u

miaow=ACC make-PRT2-3SG

The cat when (others) have been treading on her tail kept silent.
As soon as they let it go, she made ‘miaow’.

⇒

He pretends to be someone great. But when he is challenged, he gives in.

⇒

While being observed he behaves well. When unnoticed he causes trouble.

⁹⁸⁷ From Muḥammad Jabāli, Toshke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. *uyi* is a regional variant of *unyi*.

⁹⁸⁸ From ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim, Dakke and Heesa Island; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

M10.5 ⁹⁸⁹ *CĀBI NAŪIKKE KALGI KALKa ā GŌYBOCCI.*

saabi nawikke kalgi kalka aa guubossi.

saab-i nawikke kal=gi kal-ka ...

cat-PL SIM bread=ACC eat-CO

aag guub-os-s-i

PROG deny-PFV-PRT2-3SG

Like cats he ate the food and denied it.

⇒ He denies having done something.

M10.6 ⁹⁹⁰ *CĀBN AΦΦINA MOYΔBIP INDI GIPĪΔEME!*

saabn affīna mujbir inji giriideme!

saab=na affi=na mujbir ...

cat=GEN child=GEN as

inji giriide-me

carry walk.aimlessly-IMP:NEG

Do not lift up to carry and walk aimlessly as a kitten!

⇒ Let things stay in their place.

While Khālīd Karār was living in Kuwait he once transferred money to Egypt and shortly afterwards ordered it back. The bank clerk who also happened to be a Nubian remarked in a similar way:

variant *er saab nawitte tenn affīcigi injed daajii.*

You are like a cat that has picked up her kitten and roams around.

⁹⁸⁹ From Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi. His wife Asmaa A. Kenawy puts the sentence into the plural, closing with *guubossan*: ‘Like cats they ate the food and denied it.’

⁹⁹⁰ From ‘Ali Aḥmad, Dakke; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Hakīm ‘Abdu, Khālīd Karār, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

M10.7 ⁹⁹¹ *CĀB TENN ΔΦΦΙΘΙΓΙ ΚΑΛΜĀ?*

saab tenn affīci gi kalmaa?

saab tenna affī-ci=gi kal-maa
 cat 3SG:POSSchild-PL=ACC eat-Q:PRT

Did the cat eat her kittens?

⇒ Strange things happen.

⇒ Why don't you take care of your children?

M10.8 ⁹⁹² *CĀBI BIDAĀKIPĀ, İSKITTE Ā BŌΔI.*

saabi bidaakira, iskitte aa boodi.

saab-i bidaa-ki-r-a iskitte aag bood-i
 cat-PL come-COND-NEUT-3PL mouse PROG run-3SG

When the cats come, the mouse runs.

⇒ When the strong show up, the fearful/weak run away.

M10.9 ⁹⁹³ *İSKITTE ΔΙΓΡĪ ĀΓΚΙ, ΔΟΛΛΙΓ Ā ΓŌΛΜΙΝΑ.*

iskitte digrii aagki, dollig aa goolmina.

iskitte digrii aag-ki dolli=gi aag gool-min-a
 mouse many stay-COND pit=ACC PROG dig-NEG-3PL

When there are many mice, they do not dig a pit.

⇒ Many hands do not necessarily produce more, as everybody is counting on each other.

At a wedding celebration many girls were present, however, none of them felt responsible for the work to be done. In this context Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid heard the proverb said more explicitly (*iskitte digrii aa noski, ... with nos 'to be'*).

⁹⁹¹ From Ḥajja 'Atiāt Šābr, Debood; co-investigated with 'Umar Ḥasan, Thābit Zāki. The proverb has the same meaning as A5.16 and A6.6 and opposite meaning to M4.6.

⁹⁹² From Muḥammad Jabāli, Toshke; co-investigated with Zīzī Šiyām.

⁹⁹³ From MUḤAMMAD ŠUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid.

M10.10 ⁹⁹⁴ *ΒΑΡΡΑΝ ΙΚΚΙΤΤΕ ΚΑ ΤΟΥΝ ΙΚΚΙΤΤΕΓΙ CΟΥΓCΟΥ.*

barran iskitte kaa tuun iskittegi suugsu.

barra=na iskitte kaa tuu=na iskitte=gi ...
 outside=GEN mouse house inside=GEN mouse=ACC
suug-s-u
 make.leave-PRT2-3SG

The mouse from the outside scares the mouse from inside the house.

kaa Besides the building itself, ‘house’ (*kaa*) means the (extended) family, as in semantic domain 22 ‘House and Household’.

⇒ Don’t let the false people enter your house.

A devout Nubian Muslim exclaimed the proverb when hearing about the freedoms Salafi Muslims enjoy in Europe.

M10.11 ⁹⁹⁵ *ΩΕΛ ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓΓΕΓΕΔ, ΔΟΥΓΟΥΡΚΙ ΟΥΚΚΙCΟΥ.*

wel turungeged, dugurki uskisu.

wel turungee=ged dugur=gi uski-s-u
 dog hurry=INS blind=ACC give.birth-PRT2-3SG

The dog in a hurry gave birth to a blind [poppy].

⇒ Patience is best at any time.

A baby prematurely born may be ill or even die at birth. The same goes for immature ideas or deeds.

M10.12 ⁹⁹⁶ *ΩΕΛΓΟΝ ΕCΚΙΡ Δ ΚΙΔΔΙ.*

welgon essir aa kiddi.

wel=gon essi=ro aag kiddi-Ø
 dog=CO water=LOC PROG drown-3SG

⁹⁹⁴ From ‘Abd al-Şabūr Ḥāzīm, Dakke and Heesa Island; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi.

⁹⁹⁵ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awād.

⁹⁹⁶ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER. Cf. M4.5.

And a dog [can] drown in water.

⇒ Misfortune can happen even to the smartest.

The dog is compared to a smart human being. Such a proverb as well as the next one underline the high regard in which some dogs in Nubia were held.

M10.13 ⁹⁹⁷ ΔΔΕΛΝΑ ΩΕΛΙ ΒΑΡΡΑΓΕΔ ᾶ ΖΑΩΩΙΡΑ.

adelna weli barraged aa hawwira.

adel=na wel-i barraged aag hawwi-r-a
good=GEN dog-PL outside PROG bark-NEUT-3PL

The dogs of the good [person] bark outside.

⇒ A friendly home with hospitality awaits the traveller.

At night in the Dongola Reach prior to the advent of electricity and in *pre-hijra* Nubia it was pitch black. Someone walking late from one place to another could expect a house and much needed hospitality were nearby if he heard dogs barking.

M10.14 ⁹⁹⁸ ΩΕΛΙΝΑ ΓΑΩᾶΡΡΟ ΕΣΣΙΓΙ ΙΓΙΔΔΙΣΟΥ.

welina gawaarro essigi igiddisu.

wel-i=na gawaar=ro essi=gi igiddi-s-u
dog-PL=GEN potsherd=LOC water=ACC give.drink-PRT2-3SG

He gives the water to drink in the potsherd of the dogs.

gawaar usually is tableware like an earthen bowl (*kisib*) under the water storage jar that had become broken or was unusable otherwise.

⇒ He insults others.

M10.15 ⁹⁹⁹ ΚΙΣΙΒ ΩΑΡ ΒΟΥΛΛΟ, ΩΕΛ ᾶ ΕΚΚΙ.

kisib war buullo, wel aa ekki.

⁹⁹⁷ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke.

⁹⁹⁸ From ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Abd al-Qādir, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Khālid Kalos, Thābit Zāki

⁹⁹⁹ From St21; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad. There are many minor variants in use: ‘Umar Ḥasan

kisib war buu-il=ro ...
 earthen.bowl expose STAT-PTC:IPF=LOC
wel aag ekki-Ø
 dog PROG urinate-3SG

In the uncovered earthen bowl, the dog urinates [in it].

war buul is interpreted as a passive in the translation. However, it is not marked by the passive.

⇒ Look after your own things!

⇒ She is an immoral woman that other men go with.

M10.16 ¹⁰⁰⁰ *WEL EKKI KALELGI GOJOSCOY.*

wel ekki kalelgi gojossu.

wel er=gi kal-el=gi goj-os-s-u
 dog [2SG=ACC eat-PTC:PF]=ACC slaughter-PFV-PRT2-1PL

We slaughtered the dog that had bitten you.

⇒ I have not seen you for a long time.

⇒ After waiting a long time, I see you again. Where have you been?

M10.17 ¹⁰⁰¹ *WELN EEWGI UMURRO HOOLGI URRIKIRA AA SAWWAMUNU.*

weln eewgi umurro hoolgi urrikira aa sawwamunu.

wel=na eew=gi umur=ro hool=gi ...
 dog=GEN tail=ACC life.time=LOC year=ACC

urri-ki-r-a aag sawwa-munu
 press-COND-NEUT-3PL PROG go.straight-NEG

When they press the dog's tail for a lifetime, it does not go straight.

replaces *war* by the adjective *warij* giving the sentence meaning: 'The dog urinates in the naked earthen bowl.' – Khālīd Karār puts the subject *wel* in the plural: *weli*. – Thābit Zāki and 'Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad replace *ekki* by *talki* 'to lick'.

¹⁰⁰⁰ From Dahab Ḥisayn, Toshke; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm.

¹⁰⁰¹ From Khālīd Karār, Seyaale; co-investigated with Fathī 'Abd al-Sayid.

⇒ You cannot change a person's habit.

M10.18 ¹⁰⁰² *ΩΕΛ ΤΕΝΝ Ε̄ΩΓ ᾶ ΔΘΒΙΜΝΟΥ.*

wel tenn eewg aa accimnu.

wel tenna eew=gi aag acci-munu

dog 3SG:POSS tail=ACC PROG bite-NEG

The dog does not bite its tail.

⇒ This is impossible.

⇒ A person does not punish himself.

M10.19 ¹⁰⁰³ *ΕΡ ΜΑΝ ΝΟΓΓΕ̄ ΓΑΛΙΓΡΕ̄?*

er man nongee galigree?

er man nongee galig-ree

2SG DEM chameleon resemble-Q:NEUT

Do you resemble that chameleon?

-ree as Q:NEUT usually goes with 3PL. However, here it is connected with 2SG.

⇒ Don't change your opinion constantly!

variant *nongee nawitte aawmne!*

Do not behave like a chameleon.

M10.20 ¹⁰⁰⁴ *ΚΟΥΛΤΙΓΙ ΣΟΡΙΝΝΑ ΔΟΓΟΡ ᾶ ΤΕ̄ΒΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kultigi sorinna dogoor aa teebmunu.

kulti=gi sorin=na dogoor aag teeb-munu

fly=ACC nose=GEN above PROG stop-NEG

He does not stop the fly above the nose.

¹⁰⁰² From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁰⁰³ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; variant from Thābit Zāki.

¹⁰⁰⁴ From St38 and St69; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Khālid Karār; variants from Thābit Zāki and Ramaḍān Muḥammad.

- ⇒ He creates poverty.¹⁰⁰⁵
- ⇒ He is always nervous / easily irritated.
- ⇒ He does not like anything bad or shameful.
- variant *kulti tenna sorinna dogoor aa teegmunu.*
The fly does not stay on top of his nose.
- variant *tenna kony kulti aa teebmunu.*
[On] His face a fly does not stop.

4.11. Animals: Birds

When walking along the islands in the Dongola Reach the number of beautiful birds to be spotted is overwhelming. The way a bird (*kawirte*) behaves and looks like is an invitation to compare it with everyday life. Especially smaller birds like the sparrow-like *fooja* are mentioned in Nubian proverbs. The oriental turtledove (*karmal*) has big eyes and is considered beautiful due to its colourful feathers. In size it is similar to a pigeon (*minne*). The Egyptian plover (*simbil*) is considered to be the only animal that can enter and stay inside the crocodile's mouth unharmed. The medium-sized turtledove (*kuru*)

... is a bird of tender spirit and noble appearance, of quiet disposition. The Nubian people love him more than any of the other birds. ... Beautiful girls have often been compared to the turtledove. ... He has always held a special place in their hearts, because he sings so beautifully. His warm melodious notes strummed special chords in their hearts.¹⁰⁰⁶

The hoopoe with its Nubian names imitating its cry (*cikcik/shukshuk/abu hutut*) typically raises its tail. It is known to eat the dangerous termites.¹⁰⁰⁷

Prior to the *hijra*, among the larger birds, the raven (*koog*) had a slightly more negative connotation. The screaming of an owl (*ugme*) terrified Mattokki

¹⁰⁰⁵ Mattokki students, handwritten ms.

¹⁰⁰⁶ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

¹⁰⁰⁷ ENDERLIN 1919c: 21.

women, as well as the gliding of a bat (*abuskal/watwat*) in the evening.¹⁰⁰⁸
The well-liked stork (*kuruka*) is missing among the proverbs.

The decline in the number of bird species in Nubia is confirmed by the bird names that appear in the proverbs but are relatively unknown among today's Nubians, like the oriental turtledove and the Egyptian plover.

A11.1 ¹⁰⁰⁹ *φῶδα καλιν, κουρου ανμουνουν.*

fooja kalin, kuru anmunun.

fooja kal-in kuru an-munun

sparrow eat-3SG turtledove INCH-NEG

The sparrow eats [a lot], it does not become a turtledove.

⇒ He tries to take a place or post above his position. Like a doctor's receptionist cannot become a [medical] doctor.

English: A leopard cannot change its spots.

A11.2 ¹⁰¹⁰ *φῶδαν αγαρρο κουρου κουττεμουν.*

foojan agarro kuru kuttemun.

fooja=n agar=ro kuru kutte-mun

sparrow=GEN place=LOC turtledove land-NEG

On the place of the sparrow, the turtledove does not land.

⇒ It is impossible to put something big on something tiny.

A11.3 ¹⁰¹¹ *φῶδα ωϊγκιν, δωωι βορμουν.*

fooja wiigkin, jowwi boormun.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.

¹⁰⁰⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 29); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein. 'Abd al-'Azīz Maglaq adds the suffix *-kotti* 'as tall as' to *kuru*, meaning 'The sparrow eats [a lot], it does not become as tall as a turtledove.'

¹⁰¹⁰ From Mu'amr al-Fīl and relatives, Kultoos.

¹⁰¹¹ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Taha A. Taha, Kamal Hussein, Sayid Kunna. The proverb has the same meaning as A9.1 and A28.15.

fooja wiig-ki-n jowwi boor-mun
 sparrow chirp-COND-3SG sant.acacia disintegrate-NEG
 When the sparrow chirps, the acacia tree does not disintegrate.

⇒ A weak person does not have any effect on a powerful person.

⇒ Much crying does not get any results.

English: Much ado about nothing.

A11.4 ¹⁰¹² *Φῶδα ΜΙΝΕΛΛΕ? ΤΕΝΝ ΚΟΥΣΟΥ ΜΙΝΕΛΛΕ?*

fooja minelle? tenn kusu minelle?

fooja min-el-re tenn kusu min-el-re
 sparrow Q-PTC:PF-Q:NEUT 3SG:POSS meat Q-PTC:PF-Q:NEUT

What is a sparrow? What is its meat?

⇒ His possessions are worthless.

A11.5 ¹⁰¹³ *Φῶδα ΤΕΚΚΙ ΓΑΛΙΓΙΛΟ ΔΙΓΙΡΙΝ.*

fooja tekki galigilo digirin.

fooja ter=gi galig=ro digir-in
 sparrow 3SG=ACC resemble=LOC fall-3SG

The sparrow falls [settles at the place] where one resembles it.

⇒ He sits with like-minded people.

A11.6 ¹⁰¹⁴ *ΒΟΥΡΟΥ ΚΑΡΜΑΛΝ ΜΙΣΣΙΝΚΙΚῸΛ.*

buru karmaln missincikool.

buru karmal=n missi-nci-kool
 girl oriental.turtledove=GEN eye-PL-ADJR

[She is] A girl having the eyes of the oriental turtledove.

¹⁰¹² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁰¹³ From Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid, Binna. *galig* can be shortened as *alig*. I write *galig*.

¹⁰¹⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 79; and 2016: proverb 78); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. ‘Alā al-Dīn Khayri confirms that the idiom deals with beauty.

⇒ She is a beautiful girl.

A11.7 ¹⁰¹⁵ *ΣΙΡΪΙΑΝ ΙΓΙΡ ΣΙΜΒΙΛ ΚΟΥΔΔΕΝ.*

siriyān iigir simbil kudden.

siriya=n iig-ir simbil kudde-n
 slave=GEN fire=LOC Egyptian.plover get.burnt-3SG

In the slave's fire [even] the Egyptian plover bird gets burnt.

siriyān iig is a comprehensively devastating fire.

kudde is related to *kiddi* (to sink).

⇒ One gets hurt by the mistakes of the lowliest.

⇒ A problem caused by the least in society affects everyone.

A11.8 ¹⁰¹⁶ *ΒΙΚΒΙΚ ΚΙΔΔΙ ΒΩΥΝ ΤΕΝΝ ΕΩ ΣΟΚΚΕ ΒΩΥΝ.*

cikcik kiddi buun tenn ewgi sokke buun.

cikcik kiddi buu-n ...
 hoopoe drown STAT-3SG

tenn ew sokker buu-n
 3SG:POSS tail raise STAT-3SG

The hoopoe drowns, its tail raises.

⇒ He goes through great difficulties in life and still tries to get up.

M11.1 ¹⁰¹⁷ *ΙΝ ΙΡΙΣ ΚΑΩΙΡΤΕ ΣΙΜΕΡ ΦΙΡΡΙ ΒΩΥΛΓ ἄ ΨΟΥΓΟΥΡΔΙΡ.*

in iris kawirte simeer firri buulg aa shugurdir.

¹⁰¹⁵ From ḤAMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 23); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah. ‘Alā al-Dīn Khayri uses the variant *sumbul* instead of *simbil*.

¹⁰¹⁶ From Abāthīr ‘Abdullahi, Agade; co-investigated with Fu‘ād ‘Akūd. ARM-BRUSTER 2010[1965]: 210, shows that *buu* is not necessarily to be analysed as passive.

¹⁰¹⁷ From Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān. ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim replaces *in iris* by *ennan missi* ‘your eye’, making the ‘evil eye’ explicit.

in iris kawirte simee=ro firri buu-il=gi ...
 DEM smell bird [sky=LOC fly STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC
aag shugur-dir
 PROG fall-CAUS

This smell causes the flying bird in the sky to fall down.

- ⇒ That person is unfortunate.
- ⇒ The ‘evil eye’ is on that person.

M11.2 ¹⁰¹⁸ *ΚΑΩΙΡΤΕ ΦΙΡΡΙΝ ΓΑΔΔΙΓΙ, ΟΥΓΟΨΥΓΙ ΨΕΓΕΡΡΟ ΝΑΛΟΥΓ ἄ ΝΕΡΙ.*

kawirte firrin gaddigi, uguugi shegerro nalug aa neeri.

kawirte firri-n gaddi=gi ...
 bird fly-3SG always=ACC
uguu=gi sheger=ro nalu=gi aag neer-i
 night=ADV tree=LOC sleep=ACC PROG sleep-3SG

[During the day] a bird flies always, at night it sleeps the sleep on a tree.

- ⇒ One cannot run around and work without rest. Every human deserves a break.
- ⇒ Whatever you do and wherever you travel, finally you will return to your home.

The proverb has been mainly used by women. It reminds one Mattokki of a song performed by Ḥasan Ghazūli where *shegerro nalugi* is left out.

M11.3 ¹⁰¹⁹ *ΑΓΑΡΩΕΡΡΟ ΔΟΨΥΣΙ, ΚΑΩΙΡΤΕ ΤΕΔΔΕΡ ἄ ΨΙΚΙΜΝΟΥ.*
agarweerro juusi, kawirte tedder aa shiikimnu.

¹⁰¹⁸ From Umm ‘Umar Ḥasan, Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ. All three replace the Arabic loanword *sheger* by the Nubian word *jowwi* and slightly change the word order. ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm replaces *shegerro* by *tenna keetiro* ‘in his nest’.

¹⁰¹⁹ From Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke.

agar=weer=ro juur-s-i ...
 place=INDF=LOC go-PRT2-1SG
kawirte *tedder aag shiik-munu*
 bird LOC PROG chirp-NEG

I went to a place, and the bird did not chirp there.

⇒ It was a very quiet place.

M11.4 ¹⁰²⁰ *MINNĒN ΔŌCKI ΦΙΡΡΙ ΕΓΙΡΚΙ, ΕΚΚ ᾶ ΦΙΡΡΙ ΤᾶΤΙΡΡᾶ.*

minneen jooski firri egirki, ekk aa firri taatirra.

minnee=na joos=gi firri egir-ki ...
 pigeon=GEN couple=ACC fly release-COND
er=gi aag firri taar-tir-r-a

2SG=ACC PROG fly come-2/3REC-NEUT-3PL

When you release some pigeons, they will fly back to you.

minnee As a pigeon returns to its dovecote, so any present, especially a wedding present, will be returned due to the Nubian concept of reciprocity. By contrast, *ushar* (alms) are not returned.

⇒ What you offer you will get back.

⇒ Children leave their home (especially at their wedding), however, they will also return to it.

M11.5 ¹⁰²¹ *ΚŌΓΚΟΝ ΚΟΥΡᾶΒΚΟΝΝᾶΩΡΕ Τ῔ΒΡᾶ.*

koogkon kuraabkonnawre teebra.

koog=gon kuraab=gon=nawre teeb-r-a
 raven=CO spider=CO=SIM be-NEUT-3PL

They are [behaving] similar to raven and spider.

⇒ They always fight each other.

English: like cat and mouse

¹⁰²⁰ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBHI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁰²¹ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab. The proverb has the same meaning and structure as M9.6.

M11.6 ¹⁰²² *ΚΟΓ ΝΑΩΙΚΚΕ CIB ΔΑΔΙ.*

koog nawikke sib daajii.

koog nawikke sib daajii-Ø
 raven SIM fly roam-2SG

Like a raven, you fly and roam.

⇒ You surprise me (as when receiving phone calls from the same person from different places within a short time span).

⇒ You are a naughty boy (if said to a child).

The second interpretation is usually followed by an exhortation:

guuweerro teegus!

Sit down on one place on the ground!

⇒ It is unbelievable at which places you turn up.

M11.7 ¹⁰²³ *ΚΟΓ ΑΤΤΑΚΙ, ΨΙΒΙΛΛΕΓΟΝ Ἄ ΚΑΒΚΙ.*

koog attaki, shibillegon aa kabki.

koog attar-ki shibille=gon aag kabki-Ø
 raven bring-COND kite=CO PROG catch-3SG

When the raven brings [something], the kite catches [it].

=gon after the nominative noun connecting a conditional subordinate clause and a main clause is an unusual construction.

⇒ The stronger one takes away from the weaker one.

4.12. Animals: Fish

In spite of many Nile Nubians living close to the river Nile and fish (*kaare/ kaaree*) being readily available,¹⁰²⁴ proverbs dealing with fish are rare. One

¹⁰²² From ‘Ali Aḥmad, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. He regards it as an ancient proverb.

¹⁰²³ From Sayid Muḥammad, Awaad Island.

¹⁰²⁴ ‘Ali Aḥmad 2012, p.c., and Muḥammad Şubḥi 2015, p.c., remember the plentiful fish around Elephantine Island until about the 1970s. The same goes for Hāmid Khabīr 2018, p.c., referring to the Dongola Reach in earlier times.

reason could be that in part of Nubia Nubians did not catch and eat fish, except for children.¹⁰²⁵ In the early 18th century one reason was that Nubians did “not know how to use fishing-nets, but only to fish with the line.”¹⁰²⁶ Other reasons given are:

- Nubians were said to be careful lest when fishing they caught one of the angels of the Nile living alongside the fish, as a report from the early 20th century about a foundling in Argo indicates: “... who is reputed to come from the river and to be none the worse for it.”¹⁰²⁷ In this case eating fish would have been a taboo. So far no contemporary sources supporting such a taboo have been found,¹⁰²⁸ however, it may be difficult to distinguish between a local prohibition and a taboo.
- For the preparation of fish, cooking oil was needed, which was rarely available in the Nubian villages. Eating grilled fish was not an option.
- The story of the prophet Jonah (*Yunus*) who stayed in the belly of a large fish for three days and nights.¹⁰²⁹

In general the attitude of not eating fish has not changed a lot as “the region’s inhabitants have little experience in commercial fishing, which still lacks local prestige. Few boats and refrigerated storage facilities are available.”¹⁰³⁰

However, some sources state the opposite: In the Dongola Reach, nowadays fish is caught and eaten regularly.¹⁰³¹ In Dongola town freshly caught and

¹⁰²⁵ MASSENBACH 1962: 137: “... von den Kunūzi kein Fischfang betrieben wird. Dort werden gelegentlich von vorüber fahrenden Assuaner Fischerbooten Fische gekauft.“ [trans.: ... the Kunūzi do not engage in fishing. Fish is sometimes purchased there from passing Aswan fishing boats.]

‘Ali Aḥmad 2012, p.c.: As children, they went to the river, fished and fried the fish, climbed up the date palms, ate dates and did not return home till sunset.

¹⁰²⁶ HERZOG 1957b: 125.

¹⁰²⁷ CROWFOOT 1919: 183. Argo lies in the northern Dongola Reach.

¹⁰²⁸ A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.; Nivin al-Asdūdi 2018, p.c. She is a non-Nubian Egyptian involved in Nubian research.

¹⁰²⁹ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2019+2023, p.c. He restricts not eating fish to large fish.

¹⁰³⁰ FEGLEY 2011: 122.

¹⁰³¹ Kamal Hussein 2018, p.c.; Hāmid Khabīr 2018, p.c.

fried fish is offered at many restaurants for breakfast and supper. Prior to the *hijra* Mattokki who did not like to work jumped into the river and usually caught so much fish that they shared it or placed the surplus fish in the sun and dried it (*kaareen deshiish*), to be consumed especially in the cold season.¹⁰³² That contrasts with a strong decrease in the availability of fish since the building of the Aswan High Dam due to the lack of fertile Nile mud.

A12.1 ¹⁰³³ *Κᾶρε Βῆρκιν, ὠαρῆδ βελιν.*

kaare beerkin, wared belin.

kaare *beer-ki-n* *war-ed* *bel-in*
 fish satisfied-COND-3SG jump-PFV get.out-3SG

When the fish was satisfied, it jumped and got out [of the water].

⇒ In spite of having a good situation in life he wants to go somewhere else.

⇒ Don't be greedy and arrogant, instead be modest and humble.

English: to have itchy feet (i.e. to want to travel).

A12.2 ¹⁰³⁴ *Τᾶ Ἰνδο, Κᾶρε Βαριδκι ἄρ!*

taa indo, kaare barijki aar!

taar *in=ro* *kaare* *barij=gi aar-Ø*
 come DEM=LOC fish big=ACC catch-IMP:SG

Come here, catch the big fish!

⇒ You have given up something. You will get something better.

‘Awaḍ Ḥasan heard the proverb said when a young boy offered his seat on the bus to an elderly lady. The fellow passengers said it to the young boy.

¹⁰³² Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.

¹⁰³³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 62). TAHA (2011, with revised orthography) makes the water explicit, beginning the second clause with *essir toon*. He gives the second interpretation.

¹⁰³⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 184); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

A12.3 ¹⁰³⁵ *KŌȲP BEΛKIN, ΔΔBIC OP ΔNIN.**kuur belkin, dabis or anin.**kuur* *bel-ki-n* *dabis* *or* *an-in*
sheatfish leave-COND-3SG mullet king INCH-3SG

When the sheatfish leaves, the mullet becomes the king.

kuur is a larger Nile fish, stronger than a *dabis*. If caught by children it was usually grilled and eaten on the spot. Its meat was less valued than that of the *dabis*.

⇒ The power belongs to the one who is strongest.

⇒ The power of the powerful and the weakness of the weak are limited in time.

SCA: . غاب ابو شنب و لعب ابو ضنب. – “The ‘father of the moustache’ is away and the ‘father of the tail’ plays.”

English: When the cat is away, the mice will play.

M12.1 ¹⁰³⁶ *EP ECCIP ā ōYOYGOYPMENNA, EP KĀRĒĠ ā NALMENNA?
TEKEFĪR OYRKI EN ΔΔDĪERKAN, TENN OYRPO TŌN ā
CĪĪENE.**er essir aa shugurmenna, er kaareeg aa nalmenna?
tekefīr urki en daajiiarkan, tenn urro toon aa siiyene.**er* *essi=ro* *aag* *shugur-men-na* ...
2SG water=LOC PROG descend-NEG-Q:NEUT
er *kaaree=gi* *aag* *nal-men-na* ...
2SG fish=ACC PROG see-NEG-Q:NEUT
tekefīr *ur=gi* *e-n* *daajii-erkan* ...
as.sb.like head=ACC be-3SG roam-CO

¹⁰³⁵ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 35); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah; El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Hāmid Khabīr notes that the proverb may be said in the plural, too: *kuuri belkiran, dabisi or andan*. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 762.

¹⁰³⁶ From ‘Aiz Aldīn Muḥammad, West Sehel; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

tenna ur=ro toon aag siiye-ne
 3SG:POSS head=LOC from PROG stink-EMPH

Do you not go down to the river, do you not see the fish? It looks as if it is moving its head, and yet it really stinks [gets rotten] from its head.

-ka/-erkan marks a converb construction. In West Sehel it becomes *-erkan*.

⇒ He is proud.

⇒ Don't consider yourself clever because you follow your own mind. The mind is corrupted first.

This proverb has its origin in the Mattokki village West Sehel below the Aswan Dam where villagers unlike in other villages were involved in fishing. Once every week the ministry of irrigation closed the Aswan Dam. Being trapped in little pools below the village the fish was caught easily. The Nubian artist Şidqi Aḥmad from West Sehel used the proverb in one of his songs.

M12.2 ¹⁰³⁷ *āī kārē āī bōyāgi ārkiri, cīīe bōyā annāī bel tā.*

ay kaaree aay buulgi aarkiri, siiye buul annay bel taa.

ay kaaree aay buu-il=gi aar-ki-r-i ...

1SG fish live STAT-PTC:IPF=ACC take-COND-NEUT-1SG

siiye buu-il ann=nay bel taar-Ø

stink STAT-PTC:IPF 1SG:POSS=AD exit come-3SG

When I catch the fish alive, it comes out to me stinking.

⇒ I have bad luck.

M12.3 ¹⁰³⁸ *kārē oyrkeā dāḍīka, oyrkeā ā cīīe.*

kaaree urked daajika, urked aa siiye.

kaaree ur=ged daajii-ka ur=ged aag siiye-Ø

fish head=INS roam-CO head=INS PROG stink-3SG

¹⁰³⁷ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Faḥī 'Abd al-Sayid.

¹⁰³⁸ From 'Abd al-Şabūr Ḥāzīm, Dakke and Heesa Island. It is a shortened version of the preceding more poetical proverb.

The fish, with the head it roams around, from the head it gets rotten.

⇒ Instead of listening to wise men, he acts according to his own discretion.

M12.4 ¹⁰³⁹ *CIΛBāīā δαKKI BāNINΓα, ΓαρMŌΥT ωαNaBΓEΔ
BŌΥPMĒCOY, φαραδδδ δŌY ωαίΓI ΔTTA.*

*silbaaya jakki baaninga, garmuut shanabged buurmeesu,
faracca juu shaygi atta.*

silbaaya jakki baan-in=gad ...
[catfish stamp dance-3SG]=CAUS

garmuut shanab=ged buurmee-s-u ...
sheatfish whisker=INS twist.LV-PRT2-3SG

farracca juur shay=gi attar-Ø
Nile.tilapia go tea=ACC bring-3SG

When the catfish stamped [the foot] and danced, the sheatfish twisted its barbel, the Nile tilapia went and brought tea.

silbaaya is a small dangerous catfish. On its back is a thorn that stings.

garmuut is a sheatfish, a large Nile fish, dark in colour. Its barbels resemble a cat's whisker. When trying to catch it, it easily slips away. Due to its strong taste it is not popular, it is the cheapest fish. *garmuut* (Ar. loanword) has *kuur* as Nubian synonym.

farracca is a tiny tilapia fish, also named the 'small *bulti*' fish.

⇒ He was low, received money and became proud.

⇒ A bachelor went to a family with many unmarried daughters, received a wonderful welcome, but had no real intention of marrying one.

¹⁰³⁹ From Ismā'īl Muḥammad, Debood; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad Ismā'īl, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awād, Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

M12.5 ¹⁰⁴⁰ ΓΑΡΓΟΥΡ ΤΑΝΓΑΔ ΩΙΛΒΑΪΑ ΙΜΒΕΛ ΒΑΝΚΟΥ.

garguur taangad shilbaaya imbel baansu.

garguur *taar-n=gad* ...

[catfish come-3SG]=CAUS

shilbaaya *imbel baan-s-u*

catfish stand.up dance-PRT2-3SG

Because the [dangerous] catfish came the [less dangerous] catfish stood up and danced.

garguur is a large nice-looking catfish with three thorns that look like a moustache. It has a nice taste, considered better than that of the *shilbaaya/silbaaya* catfish which is afraid of the more dangerous *garguur*.

⇒ Expression of great happiness, like when two people are reunited after a long time.

⇒ He pretends to honour someone else who is larger and better looking.

4.13. Animals Regarded as Dangerous

In Nubia one finds dangerous animals such as snakes, scorpions, crocodiles, and hyenas. The first two are easily overlooked, they bite unexpectedly and cause great pain and harm, even leading to possible loss of body parts.

The most feared animal in Nubia was the snake (*kaag*/Ar. loanword *ayya*). Snakes were plentiful, especially after the melon harvest and in the fields. It never adorned a Mattokki house wall as that was considered to bring bad luck. Among the Mattokki it was not named explicitly, just paraphrased, in fear of the ‘evil eye’.¹⁰⁴¹ A snake glides over sand and stone to get rid of its skin. Once when such a snake’s skin was found in pre-*hijra* Nubia, Mattokki women divided it up with everybody wanting to turn it into a charm against

¹⁰⁴⁰ From Jamāl ‘Abdullahi, Kalaabshe. He denotes it as an ancient proverb. Co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Muḥammad Şubḥi.

¹⁰⁴¹ Muḥammad Şubḥi and A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c. Therefore, it comes as a surprise that four Mattokki proverbs explicitly mention the snake.

the ‘evil eye’. Children searching the traces of dangerous animals were able to recognise the sand viper.

Once, after a snake bit a research participant’s sister’s hand, her blood was squeezed out of the forearm. Then it was embalmed with some carefully selected crushed plants. Everything healed well, although the places where the skin was pricked for the treatment are still recognizable.¹⁰⁴²

A scorpion (*icciin*) biting (*acci*, also *jom*, *kal*) a human is a regular topic in Nubian proverbs. While scorpions surface mainly in summer they also love darkness. It drags its sting, so can be recognised by a continuous line in the middle of its trail.

Every Nubian village had its wise man or woman who knew how to treat a scorpion bite. One made sure that the infected blood did not circulate in the body. This was done by extracting it with the help of whiskers. Also pressing out the blood, tying a tourniquet round the leg, or drizzling some onion juice, lemon or bitter coffee on top of the cut was regarded as helpful. When a young Nubian from the Dongola Reach was bitten in 1959, a Halab woman quickly cut off the bite. Nevertheless, he fell into a four-day coma.¹⁰⁴³

However, one Nubian in the Dongola Reach was bitten

on the leg. After five minutes his hair fell out, and he was bald. They picked him up and took him into the house; after about an hour ... he died. Lots of people are killed by scorpions.¹⁰⁴⁴

Nowadays, such cases are treated in hospital.

Children in particular are exhorted to protect themselves from scorpions:

¹⁰⁴² Maḥmūd Sa‘īd’s wife 2014, p.c.

¹⁰⁴³ This topic is frequently discussed, such as: Kamal Hussein 2005, p.c.; Muḥammad Gum‘a 2005, p.c.; ‘Adel al-Faki 2016, p.c.; Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2017, p.c.; Sayed Bushrab 2017, p.c.; ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2019, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2022, p.c.; Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2017+2022, p.c.

¹⁰⁴⁴ MASSENBACH 1962: 137; quoting an Andaandi speaker. In the German original: “Ein Skorpion biß ihn ins Bein. Nach fünf Minuten fiel sein Haar vom Kopfe aus, er wurde kahl. Man hob ihn auf, trug ihn ins Haus; nach etwa einer Stunde ... starb er. Viele Menschen sterben durch den Skorpion.”

In the evenings the village elders sternly charged us, “Stay in your beds after sunset. Never leave your bed without wearing shoes.” The coolness of the nights would allow many scorpions and all kinds of poisonous insects to come out and look for someone into whom to inject their deadly venom.¹⁰⁴⁵

When roaming around children usually carried a stick with them. When children picked up a large stone, they habitually held a shoe ready to slay a scorpion.¹⁰⁴⁶ In the evening, the women and mothers would say to the children to protect them from scorpions:

ENNEBI NŌY? EP PAĪĪI WĀĪĪI.

ennebi nuuh er rayyi wayyi.

The prophet *Nūh* may protect you and give you health.¹⁰⁴⁷

At the *hijra* all these protective measures were to no avail. The resettlement villages, uninhabited until the arrival of their new inhabitants, offered shelter for scorpions. As a result, in the first year after the *hijra*, many children died due to being bitten by a scorpion.¹⁰⁴⁸

In contrast to snakes, scorpions adorned the walls of Mattokki houses as its “death-dealing sting ... was enough to counter the powers of evil”.¹⁰⁴⁹

Another dangerous animal is the crocodile (*elum*). It stays mainly in the middle of the river Nile where there are lots of fish. Two hundred years ago the Swiss traveller Burckhardt observed at the southern end of Lower Nubia “a great number of crocodiles, the first I had seen since leaving Cairo.”¹⁰⁵⁰

Contemporary Nubians report, too, that prior to the *hijra* there were many more crocodiles around and that they rarely attacked human beings.¹⁰⁵¹ Both

¹⁰⁴⁵ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

¹⁰⁴⁶ A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Khālīd Karār 2019, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2019, p.c.

¹⁰⁴⁹ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 157. Similarly Sayid al-Ḥasan 2014, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.

¹⁰⁵⁰ BURCKHARDT 1819: 17.

¹⁰⁵¹ Muḥammad Dahab 2014, p.c.; Aḥmad ‘Uthmān 2015, p.c.

reports are confirmed in writings from the early 18th century: “There is a vast quantity of crocodiles as well as hippopotami, which do little harm to men since they are able to find sufficient food.”¹⁰⁵² Also 200 years later there was not much fear:

We were surprised how little afraid the Nubians were when close to crocodiles. In Djemai we saw women and children wading across the ford to an island, despite the fact that less than 100 m away there was a fully mature crocodile lying in the sun.¹⁰⁵³



Figure 6: Crocodile (*elum*) on Aartigaasha Island protecting the entrance

¹⁰⁵² HERZOG. 1957b: 127; quoting monk Theodor Krump’s travel account.

¹⁰⁵³ HERZOG 1957a: 13; in the German original: “Die geringe Furcht, welche die Nubier in der Nähe von Krokodilen zeigen, überraschte uns. Bei Djemai sahen wir Frauen und Kinder die Furt zu einer Insel durchwaten, obwohl weniger als 100 m entfernt ein ausgewachsenes Krokodil in der Sonne lag.”

There was an exception: Sometimes a crocodile would pull a sheep into the water until it stopped resisting and then ate it.

When meeting a crocodile at the river bank one was advised not to run away and not to utter the word *elum*. Instead, one had to lie low, close the crocodile's mouth and wait until it slept before walking away; or look into its eyes while leaving. Another recommendation was to chase it away by shouting.

When resting on the ground or when hiding in standing water, a crocodile's intentions might be hostile. Stones were thrown toward a crocodile to chase it away after catching a child's legs. When a crocodile was half in water and half on land it was least able to defend itself. Then it was attacked at its weakest part, its bottom, in order to kill it. In one Nubian story a clever boy managed to kill a crocodile by shooting it right into the heart.¹⁰⁵⁴

Altogether, a crocodile was not regarded as clever. It can be outwitted, as a story by a Mattokki Nubian relates:

Formerly, the dog did not have a tongue. Only the crocodile had one.

The dog came to the crocodile to borrow the tongue to drink. The crocodile gave him the tongue. The dog drank and ran away with his tongue. Since then the dog has a tongue, and the crocodile has none.¹⁰⁵⁵

All that has changed: In most parts of Nubia crocodiles have become rare, except for Lake Nasser/Nubia, with even regular travellers on the Nile not having seen one. Contemporary crocodiles, while having become smaller, are considered more aggressive as there are more fishermen and fewer fish.¹⁰⁵⁶

Crocodiles are said to ward off the 'evil eye'. That is why dead crocodiles are stuffed and placed above the entrance of some Nubian houses, though nowadays with the increasing influence of Islam less than before.

The varan (*ashshi*) is a large lizard, smaller than the crocodile. While it is not counted as really dangerous, it still reaches some significant length that may create fear.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Abdel Halim Sabbar 2004, p.c.; Umrān 'Abd al-Karīm 2009, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ 2019, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2020, p.c.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Sha'bān Berber 2015, p.c. He told the story in Arabic.

¹⁰⁵⁶ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm 2014, p.c.: He says that Nile crocodiles were 10 metres long, nowadays only 6 metres.

The hyena (*eedi/eddi*) is larger than the dog, yet smaller than the jackal. It is active at night. It is recognised by its zigzag trail in the sand.

The jackal (*jeleg*) occurs in Mattokki proverbs only, in spite of many of them living in the Dongola Reach.¹⁰⁵⁷

The smart fox (*ewkol/abulhuseen/ewkool*) is

... considered by the villagers to be a very intelligent and deceptive animal. They even give it many person's names, such as Abulhusein. ...

If you find the fox doing something, you must believe it is important because ... it cannot easily be trapped.¹⁰⁵⁸

I include the ant (*goor*) in this semantic domain, as it can bite. Scattered sand was popular as a room floor. In this way, it was possible to determine whether ants had entered the room.¹⁰⁵⁹

Termites (*nore*/Ar. loanword *arda*) are one of the reasons for the specific architecture of the Nubian house. Already in the early 18th century termites were considered a nuisance:

[I]n this country everywhere there occur certain worms [termites], not a thumb long ... which are strong enough to be able to gnaw through trunks and boxes, demolishing everything.¹⁰⁶⁰

The space above the clay wall and below the roof is not only important for ventilation, but also to ward off termites. The roof is placed on stones and these in turn on a clay wall. Before termites attack the wood supporting the roof, one can see them climbing over the stones and intervene in good time. Another means to ward off termites is to frequently clean the house. However, when a house is left uninhabited, its wood quickly becomes infested with termites.¹⁰⁶¹

The lion (*koo*), already extinct in Nubia, occurs in one Andaandi proverb. It is regarded as sufficiently strong to keep what it has gained.

¹⁰⁵⁷ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2015, p.c.

¹⁰⁵⁸ MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 79.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Shawqi 'Abd al-'Aziz 2023, p.c.

¹⁰⁶⁰ HERZOG. 1957b: 126; quoting Theodor Krump's travel account.

¹⁰⁶¹ Aḥmad Hamza 2019, p.c.

Nowadays the greatest danger does not come from animals, but from traffic accidents. In post-*hijra* Egyptian Nubia, cars kill more people than snake and scorpion venom used to.¹⁰⁶²

A13.1 ¹⁰⁶³ *ΚᾶΓ ἀβῶιϭιν τῖρτι ἰριγι νᾶλκιν, ὠᾶριδι.*

kaag accisin tirti irigi nalkin, wariji.

kaag acci-s-in tirti ...

snake bite-PRT2-3SG HUM

iri=gi nal-ki-n war-ij-in

rope=ACC see-COND-3SG jump-INTF-3SG

He whom the snake bit, when he sees a rope, he jumps each time.

warijin is the main clause of the second part. The remainder is an embedded conditional clause.

⇒ After an accident (failure) even something minor that reminds one of that accident (failure) is feared.

SCA: .البقرصو الدبيب يخاف من جرة الحبل. – “He who was bitten by a snake will fear a rope being dragged.”

ECA: .إللي يُقرّصه الثعبان يخاف من ذيله.
“He who was bitten by a snake is afraid of its tail.”

English: Once bitten, twice shy.

¹⁰⁶² Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ 2019, p.c.

¹⁰⁶³ From Mu‘amr al-Fīl and relatives, Kultoos. In contrast to JAKOBI and EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI 2015, I write *tirti* as a separate word and not as a suffix for easier reading. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 14. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 569. In Zaghawa it is “That has been bitten by a snake is afraid of a grey rope.” (SULEIMAN OSMAN 2006: proverb 12) The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 173. It is one of the SCA proverbs where an earlier Aramaic proverb can be found (GOTEIN 1966: 375).

The combination of snake and rope can already be found in the story of Moses, in the Bible, Exodus 4:2-4. (GOTEIN 1966: 375)

A13.2 ¹⁰⁶⁴ *ΚᾶΓ Καρριγι Γαλιγιν.*

kaag karrigi galigin.

kaag karri=gi galig-in

snake female=ACC resemble-3SG

The snake resembles the female [person in her shape].

karri As *ondi*, *karri* is a noun, not an adjective.¹⁰⁶⁵ In a noun phrase with GEN clitic =*n* as in *saabn karri*, ‘female cat’, the clitic is not pronounced, resulting in *saam karri*.

galig/alig refers to the outside appearance of a snake and its external beauty.¹⁰⁶⁶ By contrast, =*kirii* (and Mattokki =*nawre*) refers to inner characteristics, in the case of a snake its dangerousness and deviousness.

⇒ She is most beautiful.

A13.3 ¹⁰⁶⁷ *ΚᾶΓΚΟΝ ΙΒΒΙΝΓΟΝ ΞΕΡΩΕΓΟΝΟΝ ΝΟΓΜΟΥΝΑΝ.*

kaagkon icciigon werweegonon nogmunan.

kaag=gon **icciin**=gon *werwee*=gonon *nog*-munan

snake=CO scorpion=CO one.another=COM walk-NEG.3PL

A snake and a scorpion do not walk together.

¹⁰⁶⁴ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 17); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Maḥmūd Sa‘īd’s wife. Ibrāhīm Muḥammad and El-Shafie El-Guzuuli consider it as a comparison only.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Cf. ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 119+162.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Based on her time in pre-*hijra* Nubia, A. Goo-Grauer 2015, p.c., doubts whether the proverb really deals with beauty. Among the Mattokki, snakes were not regarded as a metaphor of beauty. However, this is an Andaandi proverb.

A devout Muslim not involved in folk Islamic practices may not consider the ‘evil eye’ as a possible meaning. Also, due to the Islamic civilisation project started by the Sudanese government in 1989, the aspect of the ‘evil eye’ may have been left out. Since the proverb’s meaning is uncertain, I omit it from the further analysis of Nubian culture in chapter 5.

¹⁰⁶⁷ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography.

⇒ You take two bad-tempered wives who are jealous of each other and will fight each other.

As Muslims, a Nubian may marry up to four women. However, finding someone married to two wives is rare. This proverb stands in contrast to A15.5 that recommends taking a second wife in some circumstances.

A13.4 ¹⁰⁶⁸ *BIᶒANTEN TOGŌPN IᶒᶒĪN.*

bishanten togoorn icciin

bishante=n togoor=n icciin

old.mat=GEN under=GEN scorpion

the scorpion under the old mat

⇒ He is deceitful and causing harm unexpectedly.

A13.5 ¹⁰⁶⁹ *IPIN ΔΕΛΛΙΓΙ ἈΩΙΡΑΝ, IᶒᶒĪNGI ĒWIP ἈΡΡΑΝΚΙΡΙᶒN.*

irin jelligi aawiran, icciingi eewir aarrankiriin.

iri=n jelli=gi aaw-r-an ...

people=GEN work=ACC make-NEUT-3PL

icciin=gi eew=ir aar-ran=kirii-n

scorpion=ACC tail=LOC grab-INF=SIM-COP

They are doing the work of [other] people, it is similar to grabbing the scorpion by the tail.

⇒ Do your own work. It is difficult and dangerous to take over someone else's job.

Proverb A13.5 and the concept of *feza* as described in semantic domain 23 'Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both' seem to contradict each other. However, each one has to be understood within its own context.

¹⁰⁶⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 103; and 2016: proverb 224); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹⁰⁶⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 25; and 2016: proverb 26); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah. It does not refer to the call to a *feza* as described in semantic domain 23 'Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both'. – The English idiom is based on a party game where a player is blindfolded. He has to pin an outline drawing of a donkey's tail on a picture of a donkey.

A13.6 ¹⁰⁷⁰ ΚΟΥΓΟΥΝΔᾶΡΑ ΙΒΘΙΝΝ ΝΟΓΟ.

kugundaara icciinn nogo.

kugundaara icciin=n nogo
bug scorpion=GEN slave

A bug is the slave of a scorpion.

⇒ If you anticipate someone to be difficult, be prepared for the worst.

A13.7 ¹⁰⁷¹ ΕΛΟΥΜΟΝ ΕΚΚΙ ἈΡΚΙΝ, ΓᾶΡΕ!

elumon ekki aarkin, gaare!

elum=on er=gi aar-ki-n gaare-Ø
crocodile=CO:COND 2SG=ACC grab-COND-3SG embrace-
IMP:SG

If a crocodile grabs you, embrace [it]!

⇒ The loser should accept the victory of the other until God changes the situation.

⇒ If you are in a difficult or dangerous situation, be brave, face it and do not try to run away.

⇒ Don't be afraid of something greater!

⇒ Don't fight the authorities or a policeman; instead, stay friendly and wait for your opportunity.

variant *elumon ekki aarkin, wide teeb gaare!*

When a crocodile grabs you, you are about to embrace it!

English: Grab the bull by the horns.

¹⁰⁷⁰ From Idrīs Aḥmad, Lebeb; co-investigated with Shawqī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. *kugundaara* has *kuhundaara* as variant.

¹⁰⁷¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 55); co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltood; variant from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and Hishām Bashīr. Muḥi al-Dīn al-Ḥasan replaces *gaare* by *golli baar* literally meaning 'to swallow and to rest' symbolizing 'to hug'. *elim* is a variant of *elum*.

A13.8 ¹⁰⁷² *ΕCCE ΜΕΡ ΒΟΥΛΛΟ, ΕΛΟΥΜΙ ΔΑ ΒΟΥΡΑΝ.*

essi meer buullo, elumi daa buuran.

essi meer buu-il=ro ...

water stand STAT-PTC:IPF=LOC

elum-i daa buu-r-an

crocodile-PL be.present STAT-NEUT-3PL

In the standing water, crocodiles are present.

⇒ The situation (or a person) does not seem to be dangerous, yet it (he) is not right.

⇒ Be careful that you are not lulled into a false sense of security.

variant *essi kuddel togoor, elumi daa buuran.*

Under the pure water, there are crocodiles.

A13.9 ¹⁰⁷³ *ΕΛΟΥΜΤΟΔ ΒΩΩΙΚΑΤΤΙΝ.*

elumtood bowwikattin.

elum-tood bowwi-katti-n

crocodile-QUAL swim-skilful-COP

The young crocodile swims skilfully.

⇒ Good parents have good children.

⇒ He is diligent like his father.

variant *wizantood bowwikattin.*

The young goose is a skilful swimmer.

ECA and SCA: ابن الوز عوام.

“The goose’s son is a good swimmer.”

¹⁰⁷² From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 56); variant from Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. In villages of the northern Dongola Reach *elim* is said.

¹⁰⁷³ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; also the variant which is taken from Arabic. *wiza* is an Arabic loanword. The ECA and SCA idioms can be found in ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 360.

A13.10 ¹⁰⁷⁴ ΕΛΟΥΜ, ΩΕΡΑΝ, ΑΓΑΡΚΕΔ ΔΟΥΚΚΙΝ.

elum, weeran, agarked dukkin.

elum *wee-r-an* *agar=ged* *dukki-n*
crocodile say-NEUT-3PL place=INS pull.out-3SG

The crocodile, they say, it pulls out from the place.

⇒ If somebody is talked about, he suddenly appears.

A13.11 ¹⁰⁷⁵ ΕΛΟΥΜΓΙ ΝΑΛΜΕΝΕΛ, ΑΩΩΙΡ ΤΩΝ ΣΑΝΔΙΝ.

elumgi nalmenel, ashshir toon sandin.

elum=gi *nal-men-el* *ashshi=r* *toon sandi-n*
crocodile=ACC see-NEG-PTC:PF varan=LOC from be.afraid-
3SG

The one who did not see the crocodile, he is afraid of the varan.

⇒ He does not know a lot.

A13.12 ¹⁰⁷⁶ ΕΔΙΓΙ ΤΕ ΕΓΕΔΙΓΕΔ ΙΩΙΡΑΝ?

eedigi te egediged iiwiran?

eedi=gi *te* *eged-i=ged* *iiw-ir-an*
hyena=ACC Q:PRED sheep-PL=INS shepherd-PL:OBJ-JUS

Does one let the hyena shepherd with the sheep?

⇒ He is taking over a job he is not qualified for.

⇒ Beware of unreliable people. Don't put them in places where they have previously proven to be unreliable.

¹⁰⁷⁴ From Khālīd Ḥajj, Lebeb; co-investigated with Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

¹⁰⁷⁵ From ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Merowaarti East. Akashe Muḥammad uses the variant *ashki* of *ashshi*.

¹⁰⁷⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 106; and 2016: proverb 104); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Maḥmūd Sa’īd’s wife; variant from Anas Muḥi al-Dīn. *eedi* can also be pronounced as *eedi*. Hāmīd Khabīr connects the proverb with a piece of old Arabian poetry showing that both have the same meaning, and that concept was also known outside of Nubia.

variant *eediigi te urtinciged harseeran?*
 Does one let the hyenas guard with the domestic animals?
 English: poacher turned gamekeeper

A13.13 ¹⁰⁷⁷ *ĒΔΙ ἈΓΚΙΝ, ΕΚΚΙ ΒΙ ΚΑΛΙΝ.*

eedi aagkin, ekki bi kalin.

eedi aag-ki-n er=gi bi kal-in
 hyena stay-COND-3SG 2SG=ACC TAM eat-3SG

If the hyena stays, it will eat you.

⇒ Said to scare children: If you do not do what I tell you, I will talk to the hyena.

A13.14 ¹⁰⁷⁸ *ĒΩΚΟΛΓΙ ΤΕ ΔΟΥΜΜΑΡΕΓΙ ΙΨΙΡΚΙΔΔΙΡΑΝ?*

eewkolgi te dummaregi inyirkiddiran?

eewkol=gi te dummare=gi inyir-kiddi-r-an
 fox=ACC Q:PRED chicken=ACC watch-CAUS-NEUT-3PL

Do they cause the fox to watch the chicken?

dummare is a variant of *dummade*.

⇒ They have chosen the wrong person for the job.

variant *eewkolgi te dummadencigi baalkoran?*

Does the fox take care of the chicken?

A13.15 ¹⁰⁷⁹ *ĒΩΚΟΛ ΓΑΜΒΟΥ ΔΟΜΙΑ.*

eewkol gambu jomil.

eewkol gambu jom-il
 fox axe hit-PTC:IPF

The fox which the axe hit.

¹⁰⁷⁷ From Anas Muḥi al-Dīn, Imaani; co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹⁰⁷⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 144); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan; variant from Megdi ‘Ali Khidir. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 239.

¹⁰⁷⁹ From www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⇒ He says something yet never does it.

A13.16 ¹⁰⁸⁰ *KŌKIPĪN.*

kookiriin.

koo=*kirii-n*

lion=SIM-COP

He is similar to the lion.

⇒ Similar to a lion he does not share. He is greedy.

A13.17 ¹⁰⁸¹ *ΓŌΡΚΟΝ, ΤΕΡ ΔΒΒΙΝ, ΑΓΑΡΚΙ ΟΔΔΙΚΙΡΙΝ*

goorkon, ter accin, agarki oddikirin.

goor=*gon ter acci-n agar=gi oddi-gir-in*

ant=CO 3SG bite-3SG place=ACC be.ill-CAUS-3SG

Even the ant, it bites, it causes pain at that place.

⇒ Small causes can have a big impact (positive and negative).

⇒ Even a small child, considered weak by some, is able to do something useful.

⇒ Even an easy task needs to be taken seriously.

⇒ Don't ignore or belittle anything small.

When busy farming or repairing a waterwheel, the village elders shouted the proverb to children playing nearby to encourage them to help.

A13.18 ¹⁰⁸² *ΓŌΡΡΟ ΤŌΝ ΔΙΝΓΙ ŌCIN.*

goorro toon ajingi oosin.

¹⁰⁸⁰ From Sayida Nāsir ‘Abd al-Khāliq, Khannaag.

¹⁰⁸¹ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 87; and 2016: proverb 86); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein, Hishām Bashīr. Also in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision. *agar* can be replaced by *kul*, both having the same meaning.

¹⁰⁸² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Sāti; variant from ‘Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad. The proverb is also mentioned

goor=ro *toon* *ajin*=gi *oos-in*
 ant=LOC from skin=ACC remove-3SG

He removes the skin from the ant.

⇒ He is greedy/stingy/penny-pinching.

⇒ He is very poor. Hence, he tries to get everything no matter its value.

variant *goorro toon te ajingi oosin?*

Do you remove the skin from the ant?

⇒ Why do you want something from somebody who has nothing?

The proverb describes a person such as Taha Karrar from the village of Urbi who died in the 1990s. Villagers still tell stories about him. He collected the water dripping from the water jar, the *gaalo*, and returned it into the *gaalo* instead of wasting it, as is usually done.

Cologne idiom: Dä is en Mömmeschen-fresser.

M13.1 ¹⁰⁸³ *äñä äḅḅicin, ippina ɣoytaɣ ä çarki.*

ayya accisin, irrina gutag aa sarki.

ayya acci-s-in ...

snake bite-PRT2-3SG:SUB

irri=na guta=gi aag sarki-Ø

rope=GEN piece=ACC PROG fear-3SG

[As] the snake had bitten him, he fears a piece of rope.

⇒ After an accident even something minor that reminds one of the accident is feared.

in TAHA 2011. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 103: “He could even milk an ant.” The last interpretation is partly taken from there.

¹⁰⁸³ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki; variant from Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, ‘Amm Sali and his wife. The variant was taken up by the Nubian singer Šidqī Aḥmad (according to another source, ‘Umar Muṣṭafa). He changed it slightly: *ayyan accidgi duugeedilgo irrina gutag aa sarkine*. The proverb has the same meaning as M22.14.

variant *ayyan accarki duugeedel, irrina gutag aa sarki.*
The one who has tasted the bite of a snake, he fears a piece of rope.

English: Once bitten twice shy.

M13.2 ¹⁰⁸⁴ *āīā nāwikkē ā lāwlawīd.*

ayya nawikke aa lawlawij.

ayya nawikke aag lawlaw-ij-Ø

snake SIM PROG wind-INTF-3SG

Like a snake, he winds [himself].

lawlaw (Ar. loanword) has local variants, *lawlaw* in Dakke, *lawluwe* in Debood.

⇒ He does not talk straight.

⇒ He mixes fairness and unfairness.

M13.3 ¹⁰⁸⁵ *āīā ōegir tōn belki, āīā tenna kadēgi īā loyφφē.*

ayya shegir toon belki, ayya tenna kadeegi yaa luffee.

ayya sheg=ir toon bel-ki ...

snake hole=LOC from exit-COND

ayya tenna kadee=gi aag luffee-Ø

snake 3SG:POSS garment=ACC PROG throw.LV-3SG

When the snake comes out from the hole, the snake throws its garment [skin] away.

⇒ He masters/adapts to the situation.

M13.4 ¹⁰⁸⁶ *kāgkon arabkon talle bōykirā, kāgki moygos arabki bē.*

kaagkon arabkon talle buukira, kaagki mugos arabki bee.

¹⁰⁸⁴ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awad.

¹⁰⁸⁵ From ‘Adila Sulayman, Dehemii; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awad.

¹⁰⁸⁶ From Sha‘ban Berber, West Sehel. ‘Arab’ stands for a nomadic Arab.

kaag=gon *arab*=gon *talle buu-ki-r-a* ...
 snake=CO Arab=CO walk PROG-COND-NEUT-3PL
kaag=gi *mug-os-Ø* *arab*=gi *bee-Ø*
 snake=ACC leave-PFV-IMP:SG Arab=ACC kill-IMP:SG

When a snake and an Arab walk together, leave the snake [and then] kill the Arab.

⇒ A snake is less dangerous than an Arab.

M13.5 ¹⁰⁸⁷ *İBĖİN MİEE Ā OYCKI KAKKĖGI?*

icciin ming aa uski kakkeegi?

icciin *mingi aag uski-Ø kakkee*=gi
 scorpion Q:ACC PROG give.birth-3SG young.scorpion=ACC

A scorpion: what [kind of] young scorpion does it give birth to?

kakkee The bite of a young scorpion is worse than the bite of an old one.

⇒ As to the capacity of her mouth the daughter rises up to her mother.¹⁰⁸⁸

⇒ The daughter's talk and behaviour is worse than her mother's.

⇒ The son/child is like his/its parents in good as in bad ways.

⇒ The son is worse than his parents.

variant *icciin kakkeeg aa uski.*

The scorpion gives birth to the young scorpion.

¹⁰⁸⁷ From St31; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi, Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki; variants from Zizī Şiyām and Fawzi Ṭāhir. The first variant is also listed in MASSENBACH 1933: 183. The second variant is a dialogue between somebody asking and a group answering. *mingi* is used in Umbarakaab and Seyaale, rendered as 'why'? Nubians from Debood (as Muḥammad Shukri and 'Umar Ḥasan) replace it by the local variant *meeka*. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 24, is the same. SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 524, is a similar SCA proverb.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Mattokki students, handwritten ms.

variant *icciin ming aa uski? – kakkeeg aa uski.*

The scorpion: to whom does it give birth? It gives birth to a young scorpion.

MSA: إذا كان رب البيت للدف ضاربًا، فشيمة أهل البيت الرقص.

“If the head of the house is a drummer, the members of the family are likely to be dancers.”

English: like father, like son

The proverb is said especially about children from bad families.

M13.6 ¹⁰⁸⁹ *κακκῆγον ζῶλγ ἀ καλι.*

kakkeegon zoolg aa kali.

kakkee=gon zool=gi aag kal-i

young.scorpion=CO person=ACC PROG eat-3SG

Even the young scorpion eats/stings a person.

⇒ Small matters not taken care of can be dangerous.

M13.7 ¹⁰⁹⁰ *ιβῆιν ἰγ ἀ αββι, τεννα δογοῶρ οσσιγι εβιρριν*

icciin iig aa acci, tenna dogoor ossigi ebirrin.

icciin ii=gi aag acci-Ø ...

scorpion hand=ACC PROG bite-3SG

tenna dogoor ossi=gi ebir-r-an

3SG:POSS above foot=ACC stop-NEUT-3PL

The scorpion bites the hand, [if] they put the foot on it.

⇒ Don't go to an evil person, it will have a bad outcome.

⇒ Keep away from something dangerous.

¹⁰⁸⁹ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad.

¹⁰⁹⁰ From ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki; variant from ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad. The proverb seems to be known in the northern Mattokki villages only.

variant *icciin niigi acci? – tenna dogoor ossigi ebiril.*

Whom does the scorpion bite? The one who puts the foot on it.

A ‘scorpion’ can represent a person and a concept: an ‘evil person’ and a ‘dangerous object’.

M13.8 ¹⁰⁹¹ *ΙΒΒΙΝ ΤΕΚΚΙ ΟΥΡΡΙΛΓ ἄ ἀββι.*

icciin tekki urrilg aa acci.

icciin *ter=gi urri-il=gi aag acci-Ø*
 scorpion 3SG=ACC tread-PTC:IPF=ACC PROG bite-3SG

The scorpion bites him who treads on it.

⇒ Don’t touch anything dangerous (e.g. fire)!

The proverb is said especially to children.

M13.9 ¹⁰⁹² *ΙΒΒΙΝ, ΤΕΚΚΙ ΚΟΥΜΜΙΜΕΚΙΡΑ, ἄ ΔΟΜΜΙΝΟΥ?*

icciin, tekki kummimeekira, aa jomminu?

icciin *ter=gi kummi-mee-ki-r-a ...*
 scorpion 3SG=ACC touch-NEG-COND-NEUT-3PL

aag jom-minu

PROG beat-NEG

The scorpion, when they touch it, does it not bite?

⇒ If you had not gone to that dangerous place, nothing would have happened to you.

⇒ Don’t get close to that person, change your way.

M13.10 ¹⁰⁹³ *ΙΒΒΙΝ ΔΟΥΛΛΟΓΙ ἰᾶ δὲ ΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

icciin dullogi yaa joomunu.

¹⁰⁹¹ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki and other customers at Teahouse Sha‘bān.

¹⁰⁹² From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Ali.

¹⁰⁹³ From ‘Adīla Sulaymān, Dehemiit; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

icciin dullo=gi aag joo-munu
 scorpion heavy=ACC PROG hit-NEG

The scorpion does not hit the strong [quiet] one.

dullo has two meanings, ‘heavy/strong’ and ‘quiet’. Hence, the proverb is interpreted differently. Someone who is quiet and does not move may not be seen by the scorpion.

- ⇒ He is afraid of someone who is stronger.
- ⇒ Someone who is knowledgeable does not get hit.
- ⇒ Staying unrecognised is preferable.
- ⇒ He knows how to cover himself.

M13.11 ¹⁰⁹⁴ *Ι66̄ΙΝΝα ωεΓΙΡ̄ ῙΓΙ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡCΙ.*

icciinna shegir iigi undursi.

icciin=na sheg=ir ii=gi undur-s-i
 scorpion=GEN hole=LOC hand=ACC insert-PRT2-1SG

I put the hand [even] into the hole [burrow, crack] of the scorpion.

- ⇒ I looked everywhere, even in the most difficult places, and could not find it.

M13.12 ¹⁰⁹⁵ *αΓΙλ Ι66̄ΙΝΚ̄Ολ.*

agil icciinkool.

agil icciin-kool
 mouth scorpion-ADJR

[He is like] The mouth having a scorpion.

- ⇒ His talking is very bad.

¹⁰⁹⁴ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad.

¹⁰⁹⁵ From Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, West Aswan.

M13.13 ¹⁰⁹⁶ *TENN OYΛΟΥΓ Ι66ἸΝ.*

tenn ulug icciin.

tenna ulug icciin

3SG:POSS ear scorpion

His ear [resembles] the scorpion.

⇒ He hears the conversation that is only meant for others.

M13.14 ¹⁰⁹⁷ *ΙΡΓΟΥΤΟΝ Ι66ἸΝΓΙ ΒἘΡΑΝ ΔἄΜΝΟΥ.*

irguton icciingi beeran daamnu.

irgu=ton icciin=gi beer-ran daa-munu

POL:2PL=CO scorpion=ACC kill-INF be.present-NEG

But you are not present [able] to kill the scorpion.

⇒ I would have expected something else, but you are weak and incompetent.

M13.15 ¹⁰⁹⁸ *ΕΚΚΙ ΚΑΛἘΝ Ι66ἸΝΓΙ ΒἘΡΟCCΟΥ.*

ekki kaleen icciingi beerossu.

er=gi kal-ee=na icciin=gi beer-os-s-u

[2SG=ACC eat-NR]=GEN scorpion=ACC kill-PFV-PRT2-1PL

We killed the scorpion eating [biting] you.

=na The genitive clitic denotes a relative clause.

⇒ Why do you complain, if the problem has already been solved?

⇒ You used to visit me often. Don't mind the problem that occurred, visit me again!

¹⁰⁹⁶ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi. A possible sentence final *galig* that also would have the copula marked is omitted.

¹⁰⁹⁷ From daughter of 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Raūf's sister, Dakke; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹⁰⁹⁸ From Sha'bān Berber, West Sehel; co-investigated with Khālid Karār, Zīzī Şiyām; variants from Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid and Muḥammad Jabāli.

variant *icciin ekki kalelgi beerossu.*
We killed the scorpion that bit you.

variant *wel icciin ekk aa accilgi beerossi.*
The dog has already killed the scorpion that bit you.

M13.16 ¹⁰⁹⁹ *ΒΟΓΟΝ ΙΒΒΙΝ ΩΕΡ ΕΚΚΙ ΚΑΛΕΛ.*

bogon icciin weer ekki kalel.

bogon icciin=gi er=gi kal-el
summer scorpion=ACC 2SG=ACC eat-PTC:PF

I wish that summer scorpion bites you.

⇒ I do not wish you anything well.

M13.17 ¹¹⁰⁰ *ΕΣΣΙ ΔΟΥΛΛΟ ΕΛΟΥΜ ΔΑΜΕΚΙΝ, ΤΕΝΔΟ ΒΩΩΩ!*

essi duullo elum daameekin, tendo bowwi!

essi duul=ro elum daa-mee-ki-n ...

river=LOC crocodile be.present-NEG-COND-3SG:SUB

ter=ro bowwi-∅

3SG=LOC swim-IMP:SG

When there is no crocodile in the river, swim in it!

⇒ Take action! Nothing negative can be discovered in this action.

M13.18 ¹¹⁰¹ *ΕΛΟΥΜ ΔΑΜΕΚΙ, ΚΑΡΕ ΕΚΚΙ ΒΙ ΚΑΛΙ.*

elum daameeki, kaaree ekki bi kali.

elum daa-mee-ki ...

crocodile be.present-NEG-COND

¹⁰⁹⁹ From MUHAMMAD ŞUBHI, Elephantine Island. It is less a proverb, more a curse. He heard it from people from Debood. In Elephantine Island the lexeme *bogon* is unknown.

¹¹⁰⁰ From St64; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹¹⁰¹ From Rabī' Yūnis, Allaagi; co-investigated with Taha 'Abdu Salīm, Aḥmad 'Alī; variant from Faḥī 'Abd al-Sayid.

kaaree er=gi bi kal-i
 fish 2SG=ACC PROG eat-3SG

When there is no crocodile, the fish will eat you.

⇒ A government needs to be strong to protect its citizens. Without it other people will kill you.

⇒ Without a strong leader people will rob you.

variant *elum aagmeeki, ekki kaaree bi kali.*

If there is no crocodile, the fish will eat you.

M13.19 ¹¹⁰² *CITTĀΓKI ΕΛΟΥΜ ΕCΣΙΡ ΤŌΝ ἄ ωἈΡΡΙ ΕΝΙ?*

sittaagki elum essir toon aa warri eni?

sittaagki elum essi=r toon aag warri enii

Q:TMP crocodile water=LOC from TAM far be-Q.PRON

When is the crocodile far away from the river?

⇒ If a child is far away from its family, something is strange.

M13.20 ¹¹⁰³ *ΕCΣΙ ΤŌΥΡ ΕΛΟΥΜ ΚΙΝΙΡ ἈΝΟCΚΙ, ΚἈΡἘ ἄΓ ΕΛΟΥΜ ἈΝΟCΣΙ.*

essi tuur elum kinir anoski, kaaree aag elum anossi.

essi tuur elum kinir an-os-ki ...

water inside crocodile without be-PFV-COND

kaaree aag elum an-os-s-i

fish PROG crocodile be-PFV-PRT2-3SG

When no crocodile was inside the water, the fish became the crocodile.

⇒ If a community lacks a strong leader, everyone behaves like one.

⇒ Each village and each house needs a leader.

¹¹⁰² From Khayria Mūsa, Maharraga; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Ali.

¹¹⁰³ From Muḥammad Eid, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim.

The speaker wondered whether the proverb reflected Nubian society that is not centred on a single strong leader. However, different people feeling called to lead results in many power struggles.

M13.21 ¹¹⁰⁴ *ECCIP ELΟΥΜ ΔΑΜΕΝΙΝΓΑ, ΚΟΥΡΙ ΙΑ ΒΩΩΙΡΑ.*

essir elum daameninga, kuuri yaa bowwira.

essi=ro elum daa-menin-ga ...

water=LOC crocodile be.present-NEG-CO

kuur-i aag bowwi-r-a

sheatfish-PL PROG swim-NEUT-3PL

In the water where there is no crocodile, the sheatfish swim.

⇒ Without a strong leader everyone behaves like they want.

⇒ If the parents are away, their children do what they want.

⇒ If the brother is not at home the sister does what she wants.

M13.22 ¹¹⁰⁵ *CIΤΤΑΓΚΙ ΕΛΟΥΜΩΕΡ ΕCЦИ ΔΟΥΛΓ Α ΣΑΡΚΙΚΟ?*

sittaagki elumweer essi duulg aa sarkikoo?

sittaagki elum=weer essi duul=gi aag sarki-koo

Q:TMP crocodile=INDF river=ACC PROG fear-PRT1

When did a crocodile ever fear the river?

⇒ I am not afraid.

M13.23 ¹¹⁰⁶ *ECCI ΜΕΡ ΒΟΥΛΛΟ, ΕΛΟΥΜΙ ΔΑ ΒΟΥΡΑ*

essi meer buullo, elumi daa buura.

essi meer buu-il=ro ...

water stand STAT-PTC:IPF=LOC

elum-i daa buu-r-a

crocodile-PL be.present STAT-NEUT-3PL

¹¹⁰⁴ From Faḍl Aḥmad, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Aḥmad Gumma’, Muḥammad Jabāli.

¹¹⁰⁵ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke.

¹¹⁰⁶ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

In the standing water, crocodiles are present.

⇒ He seems to differ negatively from my initial perception.

M13.24 ¹¹⁰⁷ ΕΛΟΥΜΝ ΟΡΜΟCΚΙΚΟΛ.

elumn ormossikool.

elum=na ormossi-kool

crocodile=GEN tears-ADJR

[He is] Having the tears of the crocodile.

elum When a crocodile leaves the river, water is running down from its eyes. However, these are not tears.

⇒ When someone denies having done something yet someone else does not believe it, the latter says the proverb.

M13.25 ¹¹⁰⁸ ΔΕΛΕΓΚΟΝ ΔΑΡΒΑΔΙΓΙ ΩΔΙΕΝΑ?

jelegkon darbadigi wayena?

jeleg=gon darbad-i=gi waye-na

jackal=CO chicken-PL=ACC be.careful-Q:NEUT

And does the jackal care for the chicken?

⇒ He is not trustworthy and should not be put into a leadership position.

⇒ You expect something from someone who cannot give it to you.

MSA: سلموا مفاتيح البرج للقط.

“They entrusted the keys of the pigeon-house to the cat.”

English: You don’t put the lunatics in charge of the asylum.

¹¹⁰⁷ From Megdi Muḥammad, Dakke; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid and Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir.

¹¹⁰⁸ From St37; co-investigated with Khālid Karār. The MSA idiom is taken from BURCKHARDT 2012[1875]: proverb 325.

M13.26 ¹¹⁰⁹ ΔΕΛΕΓ ΑΝΝ ΔΟΓΟΡ ΔΟΥΛ ΤΑΚΙΝ, ΑΪΓΙ ΟΣΩΕ.
ΑΪΚΟΤΤΙ ΤΑΚΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΑΪΓΙ ΒΟΚΚΙΡΟΣΩΕ.

jeleg ann dogoor duul taakin, aygi ooswe.

aykotti taakin goon, aygi bokkiroswe.

jeleg ann dogoor duul taar-ki-n ...

jackal 1SG:POSSCOMP big come-COND-3SG:SUB

ay=gi oos-we ...

1SG=ACC remove-IMP:PL

ay-kotti taar-ki-n goon ...

1SG-as.tall.as come-COND-3SG SUB

ay=gi bokki-ir-os-we

1SG=ACC hide-TR-PFV-IMP:PL

When a jackal bigger than me comes, [say] ‘remove me’.

And when [a jackal] as tall as me comes, [say] ‘hide me’.

-we Here, the jackal is spoken to in the plural form.

⇒ You are a liar.

A human can fight someone his own size but not someone larger. Hence, the literal advice of the proverb is not to be heeded.

M13.27 ¹¹¹⁰ ΟΥΡΤΙ ΩΑΡΡΙ Ιᾶ ΑΝΓΙ, ΔΕΛΕΓ ᾶ ΚΑΛΙ.

urti warri yaa angi, jeleg aa kali.

urti warri aag an=gi ...

[domestic.animal far PROG INCH]=ADV

jeleg aag kal-i

jackal PROG eat-3SG

After the domestic animal was [moved] far away, the jackal eats [it].

⇒ Stay with your kin to be safe and secure, work nearby and keep your wife close.

¹¹⁰⁹ From the mother of Khālid Karār, Seyaale; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹¹¹⁰ From St76; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer.

English: Home is where the heart is. – There is no place like home.

M13.28 ¹¹¹¹ ΔΕΛΕΓΚΟΝ ΔΟΥΛ ΑΝΟΣΚΙ, ΩΕΛΙ ΤΕΚΚ ἄ ΔΒΒΙΡΑ.

jelegkon duul anoski, weli tekk aa accira.

jeleg=gon duul an-os-ki ...

jackal=CO old INCH-PFV-COND

wel-i ter=gi aag acci-r-a

dog-PL 3SG=ACC PROG bite-NEUT-3PL

However, when the jackal has become old, the dogs bite it.

St. transl.: When the jackal grows old, his strike becomes graceful and a laughing stock to the dogs.

⇒ When a strong/influential person gets old, the common people treat that person however they want.

⇒ An elderly man will not be respected by anyone.

variant *eddi duru anoski, weli tenna dogoor aa kashkira.*

If the hyena has become old, the dogs play above it.

In the year after the Egyptian revolution in January 2011 the customers of a teahouse applied the proverb to the fate of the ousted president Hosni Mubarak.

M13.29 ¹¹¹² ΕΔΔΙΓ ἄ ΝΑΛΛΑΝ ΓΟΝ, ΤΕΝΝ ΕΤΤΙΡΓ ἄ ΤΙΓΡΑ.

eddig aa nallan goon, tenn ettirg aa tigra.

eddi=gi aag nal-r-an goon ...

hyena=ACC PROG see-NEUT-3PL SUB

tenna ettir=gi aag tig-r-a

3SG:POSS trail=ACC PROG trace-NEUT-3PL

Although they see the hyena, they trace its trail.

¹¹¹¹ From St59; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Thābit Zāki; variant from MEKKI MUḤAMMAD.

¹¹¹² From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad Ūrabi, Khālid Karār, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Abd al-Qādir. The last one drops *tenna*; variant from Faḍl Aḥmad.

eddi ... ettir Following a hyena in a straight line instead of its zigzag trail is faster, yet also more dangerous. The interplay of both metaphors, ‘hyena’ and ‘trail’, creates different meanings:

- ⇒ He is doing dangerous things.
- ⇒ He is foolish, so the hyena will harm him.
- ⇒ Something is not disclosed or left undone out of fear. Instead, something/someone else is blamed. As when a magistrate’s (Ar. ‘*umda*) child misbehaves, grievances are not voiced out of fear.
- ⇒ Face the truth and tell the people straightforwardly.
- ⇒ If something is available here, why do you look for it somewhere else?
- ⇒ Why do you not go straight for it?

variant *eddi teebin goon, minnay ossigi yaa tigma?*

While the hyena stands [and is seen while it stands], why do they trace the foot?

M13.30 ¹¹¹³ *ΕΔΔΙ ΕΓΕΔ ΩΙΤΤΙΓ ᾶ ΚΑΛΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

eddi eged wittig aa kalmunu.

eddi eged witti=*gi* aag kal-munu

hyena sheep crazy=ACC PROG eat-NEG

The hyena does not eat the crazy sheep.

⇒ The government employs the clever one.

⇒ He is of no use.

M13.31 ¹¹¹⁴ *ΕΔΔΙ ΔΟΥΛΤΕΡΑ.*

eddi duultera.

eddi duul-tera

hyena big-COP

¹¹¹³ From Rabī’ Yūnis, Allaagi; co-investigated with Taha ‘Abdu Salīm, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹¹¹⁴ From Khālid Karār, Seyaale.

He is a big hyena.

⇒ He is a bad man.

M13.32 ¹¹¹⁵ *ΔΒΟΥΛΖΙCĒΝΓΟΝ ΩĒΡΕΔ ἄΓΙ:*
ΕΝΝΑ ΒΕΛΑΡΚΙ ΤῸΡΑΝ ΟΩΩΕΛΓΕΔ ΟἰΡΟΥ.

abulhiseengon weered aagi:
enna belarki tooran owwelged oyiru.

abulhiseen=gon *wee-ed* *aag-i* *enna* ...
fox=CO say-PFV PROG-3SG 2SG:POSS
bel-ar=gi *toor-an* *owwel=ged* *oyi-r-u*
exit-NR=ACC enter-NR first=ADV:INS know-NEUT-2SG

And the fox has said: You know your exit before entering.

⇒ Before starting a project make sure you know how to finish it well.

M13.33 ¹¹¹⁶ *ΔΒΟΥΛΖΙCĒΝ ΔΑΡΒΑΔΙΓ ἄ ΚΑΛΙ.*
abulhiseen darbadig aa kali.

abulhiseen *darbad-i=gi* *aag* *kal-i*
fox chicken-PL=ACC PROG eat-3SG

The fox eats the chicken.

⇒ Human beings are deceitful.

M13.34 ¹¹¹⁷ *ΓῸΡΡΟ ΤῸΝ ΩΔΖΑΜΓ ἄΓ ὈCΑΝ.*
goorro toon shahamg aag oosan.

goor=ro *toon* *shaham=gi* *aag* *oos-an*
ant=LOC from fat=ACC PROG remove-3PL

They remove the fat from the ant.

⇒ They are able to make something from a little/nothing.

¹¹¹⁵ From ‘Abd al-Şabūr Ḥāzim, Dakke and Heesa Island.

¹¹¹⁶ From ‘Adīla Sulaymān, Dehemii; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad.

¹¹¹⁷ From Zahra, Elephantine Island; written down by A. Goo-Grauer; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Muḥammad.

This and the next proverb use the same metaphor yet with opposite meaning. In the one the ant stands for frugality, in the other for greed.

M13.35 ¹¹¹⁸ ΓᾠΡΡΟ ΤᾚΝ ΔΕC Ἰᾗ ΒΕΛΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

goorro toon des yaa belmunu.

goor=ro toon des aag bel-munu

ant=LOC from fat PROG exit-NEG

The fat does not come out from the ant.

⇒ He is greedy/stingy/penny-pinching.

M13.36 ¹¹¹⁹ ΔΙΡCΑΝΑ ΒᾗΒΚΙ ΑΡΔΑ ΚΑΛΟCCOΥ.

jirsana baabki arda kalossu.

jirsa=na baab=gi arda kal-os-s-u

shame=GEN door=ACC termite eat-PFV-PRT2-3SG

The termite [completely] ate the door of shame.

⇒ You cannot be trusted (said by a lawyer).

⇒ You are doing something that does not conform to the society's traditions and conventions.

⇒ You are not ashamed of what you are doing.

The proverb may have to be understood in the context of honour and shame. If at the entrance there is no door, anything shameful may enter or leave.

¹¹¹⁸ From 'Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad, Dehemiit; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Abd al-Qādir.

¹¹¹⁹ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ, Aḥmad 'Uthmān, Khālid Karār. The word 'tradition' was said while co-investigating with Khālid Karār.

4.14. Kinship: Children and Parents

For the average Sudanese the extended family and its members including the children provide a central feature of life:¹¹²⁰ “Having children is considered as an important factor for family stability.”¹¹²¹ Childlessness is a great obstacle, with the woman, or the ‘evil eye’ put on the woman, being blamed for it.¹¹²² When discussing the number of children and the few possessions they have, many Nubians would shrug their shoulders and let me know that *Allāh* would provide. In the past, if a family had too many children and was poor, one child was given to another family to work as a shepherd. It was called ‘child of separation’ (*baayin tood*).¹¹²³

Family not only extends to parents and children; everyone living in or connected to a household is considered part of the family, as shown in semantic domain 22 ‘House and Household’. In the following list of up to five successive generations each child has its own Nubian specification:

<i>tood</i>	child
<i>assi</i>	grandchild
<i>wissi</i>	great-grandchild
<i>kaanye</i>	great-great-grandchild (Andaandi) ¹¹²⁴
<i>delem/dalam</i>	great-great-grandchild (Mattokki) ¹¹²⁵
<i>kalany</i>	great-great-great-grandchild (Andaandi) ¹¹²⁶

¹¹²⁰ This sentence and the term ‘kinship’ is in no way meant to “measure degrees of advancement or modernization”. (FABIAN 2014: 75) While not living in an extended family, I myself regard family values as an integral feature of my own life.

¹¹²¹ SALWA AHMED 2005: 201; writing about Sudanese Arabs.

¹¹²² A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.

¹¹²³ Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.

¹¹²⁴ While the lexeme is missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965], it is known among contemporary Andaandi speakers as they wish the newly-wed couple to see their great-great-grandchildren.

¹¹²⁵ While the lexeme is missing in MASSENBACH 1933, there are still enough contemporary Mattokki around who know the word, as ‘Umar Ḥasan 2016, p.c.

¹¹²⁶ This lexeme is missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965], and relatively unknown among contemporary Andaandi speakers, only Hāmid Khabīr 2016, p.c., said it.

This chart does not work all the way in the other direction:

baab / een father / mother (usually with a possessive pronoun)
yoo my mother (term of endearment, Andaandi only)
indi / yooyo my mother (term of endearment, Mattokki only)
aw / uu grandmother / grandfather (usually with a poss. pronoun)
indi duul / yooyo duul my grandmother (term of endearment, Mattokki only)

In the worldview of at least some Nubians, on the 7th day after conception every human being receives a spirit (*newerti*) from God. In order to strengthen her the mother-to-be is given dates. Her mother carries a lot of responsibility, frequently taking in her pregnant daughter.¹¹²⁷

During childbed further customs may be observed: During the first forty days the young mother continues to stay with her mother, not leaving the home. Alternatively, if she gives birth at her new home, her mother joins her. The presence of her mother enables the mother in childbed to stay away from any household chores, such as cooking or cleaning, to recover from the birth. She sleeps in the same room as her baby. Perfume and good quality incense (Ar.: *bukhūr*) are placed next to them. Each morning incense is burnt and taken into each room. Besides its purifying effect the odour is supposed to protect mother and baby from the ‘evil eye’. An aubergine is hung over the door. Pictures and wall hangings are surrounded by garlands. The light/lamp is not allowed to die out at night. Also, in the past a water bowl with a piece of metal in it was put underneath the bed. Forty days after the birth the mother and her female relatives go to the river Nile and wash their faces.¹¹²⁸ –

In pre-*hijra* Nubia **grandparents** were heavily involved in their grandchildren’s upbringing and socialisation as the father usually worked far away

¹¹²⁷ Kamal Hussein 2022, p.c. – Umm Ḥamdi 2001, p.c.: Miriam (the mother of Jesus/*’Īsā*) ate dates during her pregnancy. – Yāsir Muḥammad 2011, p.c.: If the daughter stays with the mother, the husband remains on his own.

¹¹²⁸ Inhabitants of Urbi 2005, p.c. My wife Eliane observed some of these customs during her visits to Urbi. They may show ancient Middle Eastern influence. For instance, in Jewish history the mother had to stay at least forty days at home without leaving it (The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Leviticus 12: 2-4).

and the mother was busy in house, garden and agriculture. At meal times grandparents, mothers and children frequently ate together, enabling children to observe culturally appropriate behaviour. That left a conservative imprint on children.¹¹²⁹

All over Nubia it is estimated that grandchildren living closer to their grandparents become friendlier, as Nubian children joke more with grandparents than with parents, and vice-versa. Unlike parents, Nubian grandparents do not give instructions, but explain to their grandchildren what they should do.¹¹³⁰

One Dongolawi relates about his childhood in the 1960s: In his village all the adults were like fathers and mothers. Everyone looked after any child and corrected it. When somebody told a child's father about its behaviour, the statement was trusted. That coincides with the biography of a Mattokki Nubian whose mother died at an early age, and later his father. Everyone in the village cared about him. He closed his narrative by "Nubians love orphans."¹¹³¹

A child up to the age of 10 is believed to need lots of love (*dolti*) and attention; elderly men and women kissing the child has been standard behaviour, and physical punishment is considered for an older child in exceptional cases only. It is more common to present the child for something well done with a small gift (*kiray/kare*), like a date.¹¹³² While proverb M9.26 supports such behaviour, proverb A9.8 puts a different emphasis. Instead, words are clear enough to produce the desired behaviour.

In pre-*hijra* Nubia at about the age of 12 a boy left his home and began working in the cities, meaning that his inculturation was finished. A boy of the same age in the Dongola Reach became more involved in agriculture and took some responsibility for his family and later for his elderly parents.¹¹³³

¹¹²⁹ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm 2015, p.c.; ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2017, p.c.

¹¹³⁰ Thourya Muḥammad 2022, p.c.; ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan 2022, p.c.; Ordese Ḥamed 2022, p.c.

¹¹³¹ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. The same goes for the Mattokki: Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2017, p.c. – Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2018, p.c.

¹¹³² Thābit Zāki 2016, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.

¹¹³³ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2017, p.c.

However, even in Nubia that kind of support cannot be taken for granted, as in proverb A14.12.

The perception of family life in Nubian proverbs differs from postmodern society in that the illustrations are taken from a stable family life. During a child's upbringing and socialisation individualism is not encouraged.¹¹³⁴ Instead, a child and its parents are expected to observe the village's norms and educational goals.

In the meantime, globalisation, modern media and other outside influences have changed life and educational methods in the Sudan and Egypt. A mother of a new born baby may leave for a hospital visit. Some of the descriptions of family life have become obsolete. Increasing individualism creates a dilemma for villagers who want to correct another family's misbehaving child. If they keep quiet, the problem persists and the village suffers; if they correct it, the child's parents may react in a hostile way.¹¹³⁵

A14.1 ¹¹³⁶ *ANN BITĀNGI BEΔΔITIPMOYNOY, ANN TŌY MEN
BEΔΔITIPIN.*

ann bitaangi bedditirmunu, ann tuu men bedditirin.

ann bitaan=gi beddi-tir-munu ...

1SG:POSSchild=ACC request-2/3REC-NEG

ann tuu men beddi-tir-in

1SG:POSSstomach DISC request-2/3REC-3SG

I do not pray for my child, indeed, my innermost being
[silently] prays [blesses it].

⇒ What is in the womb is God's gift, afterwards one cares for it.

⇒ Because of the parents' prayers a child turns out well.

¹¹³⁴ A Nubian father in the Dongola Reach showed the opposite of individualism: Having married twice and begetting eleven children, he addressed them collectively which he felt to be sufficient. He could not see any reason to talk with each child individually.

¹¹³⁵ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹¹³⁶ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Bashīr 'Abdallah, Aḥmad Sāti, Samira El-Melik-Ziadah.

A mother's prayers for her child come from the depths of her heart, without being asked or reminded. Therefore, in the *Qur'ān* there are no such exhortations.

A14.2 ¹¹³⁷ *BITĀN, EP OYCKIMENCIN, ENΔI ΔNMOYN.*

bitaan, er uskimensin, endi anmun.

bitaan er uski-men-s-in ...

child 2SG give.birth-NEG-PRT2-2SG

endi an-mun

2SG:POSS INCH-NEG

The child, you did not give birth to, it does not become yours.

⇒ Taking care of one's own property is better than that of others.

The proverb is based on Islamic teaching where a child cannot be adopted.

A14.3 ¹¹³⁸ *BITĀNGI ΔPKOC, TICCIΓI ΔŌΨKOPAN.*

bitaangi arkos, tissigi doonykoran.

bitaan=gi arki-os ...

child=ACC throw.away-PFV

tissi=gi doony-kor-an

afterbirth=ACC bring.up-PRT1-3PL

They have thrown away the child [and instead] raised the afterbirth.

⇒ It is a naughty child.

A14.4 ¹¹³⁹ *BITĀN TENN ŌĒΔIP TŌN OYNΨΟΥΡ BŌŪN.*

bitaan tenn weedir toon unyur buun.

bitaan tenn weed=ir toon unyur buu-n

child 3SG:POSS cradle=LOC from know STAT-3SG

¹¹³⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

¹¹³⁸ From 'Abdullahi 'Uthmān, Irtide.

¹¹³⁹ From 'Abd al-Bāšit Hāj, Shebatood; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Nemat Abdalrahman.

The child is [in] a known state since its cradle.

weed

For the first forty days of its life, a Nubian baby was laid in a cradle.

⇒

When scrutinising a child's face one knows what it will become, like a hero or someone else.

⇒

A child's future is predestined.

⇒

If a child is helpful and intelligent, it will also be when it is old.

A14.5 ¹¹⁴⁰ *BITĀN ĠIP WĒRKI DIGIRIL, ERIGKATTI ANIN.*

bitaan gir weerki digiril, erigkatti anin.

bitaan *gir* *weer=gi* *digir-il* ...
 child time one=ACC fall-PTC:IPF
erig-katti *an-in*
 reason-skilful INCH-3SG

A child that falls once, it becomes clever.

⇒

A child learns from its mistakes.

A14.6 ¹¹⁴¹ *BITĀN NOBREĠI GOLLOSKIN, TEKKI OUSKEĠI, ĠŌYBIRAN.*

bitaan nobregi golloskin, tekki uskeli, guubiran.

bitaan *nobre=gi* *golli-os-ki-n* ...
 child gold=ACC swallow-PFV-COND-3SG
ter=gi *uski-el-i* *guub-r-an*
 3SG=ACC give.birth-PTC:PF-PL deny-NEUT-3PL

When a child has swallowed gold, [the parents] who gave birth to him, they deny it.

⇒

If a child is spoilt its parents will never accept any fault in it. However, they should take responsibility for it.

¹¹⁴⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 57); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, the family of Maḥmūd Sa'īd.

¹¹⁴¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 70; and 2016: proverb 69); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

A14.7 ¹¹⁴² *BITĀNGI ΔΟΨΙΡΑΝ, ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΚΑΡΔΕΛΓΙ ΓΟΡΡΑΝΚΙΡῙΝ.*
bitaangi doonyiran, kulu karjelgi goorrankiriin.

bitaan=gi doony-iran ...

child=ACC bring.up-INF

kulu karjel=gi goor-ran=kirii-n

[black.stone=ACC gnaw-INF]=SIM-COP

Raising a child is similar to gnawing the strong black stone.

⇒ Education needs lots of patience.

A14.8 ¹¹⁴³ *BITĀN TIMBĀBKI ΓĪPIN.*

bitaan timbaabki giirin.

bitaan tim-baab=gi giir-in

child 3PL:POSS-father=ACC surpass-3SG

The child surpasses his/her father.

⇒ He masters something better than his teacher/master.

SCA: الولد فات ابوه. – “The boy left behind the father.”

A14.9 ¹¹⁴⁴ *TŌNIN KĀP ΦΟΓΙΡ ΙΨΚΑΡΤΙΝ.*

toonin kaar fogir ishkartin.

tood-i=n kaa=r fogir ishkarti-n

child-PL=GEN house=LOC poverty guest-COP

In a house with [many] children poverty is a guest.

¹¹⁴² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 167); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹¹⁴³ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹¹⁴⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 59); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. While ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 203, has both a long *oo* (*tooni*) and a short *o*, Hāmid Khabīr confirms the short *o* for the irregular plural form. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 36, has the opposite translation and meaning: “In a house with many boys, poverty cannot enter.” – “Villagers still believe in the strength and unity of boys[,] ... boys grow up, work and keep the family’s name.” – During the digital NubiaFest in 2020, Elyas Khalil also mentioned MOHAMED MUTWELI BAD’s Halfawī variant and discussed it.

- ⇒ A father has to wait until his children are grown up and help him with farming.
- ⇒ Poverty is only temporary, even if one has many children. It leaves, as a guest departs.

A14.10 ¹¹⁴⁵ *Κᾶ τῶνιγι κῶλ, μῖνβι ναλμοϋν.*

kaa toonigi kool, miinci nalmum.

kaa tood-i=gi kool miinci nal-mun
house son-PL=ACC having hunger see-NEG

A house having sons does not see hunger.

- ⇒ Sons are beneficial as they will do the manual farm work.

A14.11 ¹¹⁴⁶ *ΒΟΥΡΟΥ ΤΙΜΒΑΒΝ Δᾶρ ἰψκαρτῖν.*

buru timbaabn daar ishkartin.

buru tim-baab=n daa=r ishkarti-n
daughter 3PL:POSS-father=GEN home=LOC guest-COP

A daughter is a guest in her father's home.

- ⇒ Having sons is more important than having daughters, since after marriage a son stays at home whereas a daughter leaves.
- ⇒ A woman becomes the ruler in her own home, not in her father's home.

variant ¹¹⁴⁷ *buru tineenn kaar ishkartin.*

A daughter is a guest in her mother's home.

¹¹⁴⁵ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi. He specifically translated *tooni* as 'sons'.

¹¹⁴⁶ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, Shawqī 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Ammār Ya'qūb.

¹¹⁴⁷ 'ABD AL-'AAL AḤMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography. Rufā'ī 'Abd al-Laṭīf considers the variant unlikely as a house is owned by the father. Alternatively, the variant may reflect an earlier state of society when women had higher status.

ECA:¹¹⁴⁸ . خليها قاعدة مُعززة مُكرمة في بيت أبوها لغاية ما يجيلها عدلها.
 “Let her [the girl] remain in the hospitality of her father's house until someone comes to ask her for marriage.”

A14.12 ¹¹⁴⁹ *ΟΥΣΚΕΛΝΔΙΓΟΝ ΤΩΔΙΡ ΓΑΡΙΝ, ΤΩΝΔΙΓΟΝ ΒΕΡΡΟ ΓΑΡΙΝ.*
uskelndigon toodir gaarin, toondigon berro gaarin.

uski-el-ndi=gon tood=ir gaar-in ...
 give.birth-PTC:PF-POSS=CO child=LOC embrace-3SG
tood-ndi=gon ber=ro gaar-in
 child-POSS=CO wood=LOC embrace-3SG

While the one who gave birth [the parents] embraces the child, it [the child] embraces the wood belonging to the child.

gaar describes a habitual action: The parents continuously think about the child; the child continuously about other people and objects.

ber describes anything physical. The child’s metaphorical embracing of objects is in antithesis to its parents’ concern for the child itself.

⇒ The heart of a mother and a father are soft (toward the child) whereas the heart of the child is hard (toward his parents).

ECA: . قلبي على ولدي انقطر، وقلب ولدي علي حجر.
 “My heart was broken for my child, and my son’s heart is [like] a stone toward me.” – “After all I did for my son, there is no appreciation from his side.”

SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN (1906: 93) heard the proverb when a Mattokki mother met her daughter who had been absent for some time. Most probably they spoke in Mattokki to each other. However, I have not heard a Mattokki equivalent to this Andaandi proverb.

¹¹⁴⁸ The corresponding ECA proverb provided by Muḥammad ‘Ali represents *Ṣa’idi* Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. He writes: “Someone from Upper Egypt told me that they have a common colloquial sentence, and not really a proverb.”

¹¹⁴⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 109; and 2016: proverb 107); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

A14.13 ¹¹⁵⁰ *AMBĀB WAĪ, INDI WAĪ!*

ambaab way, indi way.

am-baab way *indi* way

IPL:POSS-father oh! my.mother oh!

Oh our father, oh my mother!

⇒ I regret the painful incident that has happened.

Another exclamation is *buu/buuy* which is cried out when someone dies.

A14.14 ¹¹⁵¹ *ḠĀĪPA AN TINĒN OGIJKI, ĀBA, EN.*

hayra an tineen ogijki, aaba, en.

hayra an tin-een=n *ogij=gi* ...

distress INCH 3SG:POSS-mother=GEN man=ACC

aaba e-n

my.father say-3SG

The one coming into distress says to his mother's husband:
"My father".

eenn ogij stepfather

⇒ He is forced to say or do something he does not like.

M14.1 ¹¹⁵² *MĒWĠON ĀGI, Ā OYCKIDIL EKKON MAṘIC BŌY.*

meewgon aagi, aa uskidil ekkon maris buu.

meew=gon aag-i ...

pregnant=CO stay-3SG

aag uskid-il er=gon maris buu-Ø

PROG birth-PTC:IPF 2SG=CO get.tired STAT-3SG

¹¹⁵⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 216); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹¹⁵¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 76; and 2016: proverb 75); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. In his 2016 edition Hāmid Khabīr replaces the Arabic loanword *hayra* by *kes/kesar*.

¹¹⁵² From St45; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Muḥammad Ṣubḥi; variants from Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid and Thābit Zāki.

And the pregnant woman sits [squats], the one who helps with the birth [midwife] gets tired.

⇒ She is worried more about others than about herself.

⇒ The one who has a problem is less worried than her friends.

variant *meewgon aa uski, tekkon aa taaji.*

While the pregnant woman gives birth, she/he [the midwife/the husband] cries.

taaj describes the crying sound of a pregnant woman, who is in labour.

variant *ya uskiilgo kittegi, suutto maris buu.*

While she who is giving birth is silent, the not-pregnant-one gets tired.

The proverb changes the perceived role of two actors, the pregnant woman and the midwife (or husband). On other occasions, such as a wedding, it is said to the bride's mother. While the bride sits on the bridal chair, her mother is busy organising and easily gets tired.

M14.2 ¹¹⁵³ *αΦΦΙΓΙ ΟΥΣΚΙ ΜΕΝΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΕΡΡΙΓ Ᾱ ΚΑΨΕΡΑ.*

affigi uski meenin goon, errig aa kaashera.

affi=gi uski meen-in goon ...

child=ACC give.birth be.not-3SG SUB

erri=gi aag kaashe-r-a

name=ACC PROG search-NEUT-3PL

Before she gives birth to the child, they search for the name.

⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.

Prior to contemporary medical means before birth the gender could not be predicted. Picking a child's name early made no sense.

¹¹⁵³ From Khālid 'Awad Hilal, Kushtamne West.

M14.3 ¹¹⁵⁴ ΟΓΙΣ, ΟΝΔΙΓΙ ΟΥΣΚΕΔ ἄΓΙΛ, ἄ ΔΙΜΝΟΥ.

ogij, ondigi usked aagil, aa diimnu.

ogij *ondi=gi usked aag-il aag dii-munu*
 man male=ACC birth STAT-PTC:IPF PROG die-NEG

The man [father] who[se wife] has given birth to a male [son],
 he does not die.

⇒ Those who leave behind a male successor will not be forgotten.

M14.4 ¹¹⁵⁵ ἀφφιβιγοδον καωκικιν, κανδιγεδ καωκοϋ.

afficigodon kashkikin, kandiged kashku.

affi-ci=godon kashki-ki-n kandi=ged kashki-u
 child-PL=COM play-COND-2SG:SUB knife=INS play-2PL

When you play with children, you (POL:PL) play with a knife.

⇒ Children play with children, adults stay with adults.

⇒ He is foolish as he does with children what one should do with adults.

SCA: لعب الاقدرك منك بفك صدرك.

“Playing with someone that is not your size hurts your chest.”

The proverb describes how many Nubian fathers treat their children. Once in the Dongola Reach I joined our daughter in playing with the village children. When I realised that I was losing some of the authority that children perceive toward the older folk, I left the children and joined the adults.

The proverb occurs in its opposite form, where it is an advice:

¹¹⁵⁴ From St5; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

¹¹⁵⁵ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. The two Mattokki co-investigators are from villages far away (Umbaraak/Toshke and Seyaale). Otherwise the proverb is relatively unknown, also thus far no corresponding Andaandi proverb has been attested. However, it is present in Western Sudanese Arabs (SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 29).

*afficigodon kashkikin, ingrikaneeged kashku.*¹¹⁵⁶

When you play with children, play with tenderness!

M14.5 ¹¹⁵⁷ *αφφιγι δοϊαρ ρασαγι δουσκαρ γαλιγμα.*

affi doyar hasagi duskar galigma.

affi=gi doyar hasa=gi duski-ar ...

child=ACC raise-NR small.stone=ACC crush-NR

galig-ma

resemble-COP

Raising a child resembles crushing a small [strong] stone.

⇒ Raising children is serious work. Women do an important and difficult job.

⇒ Advice to a girl who is not yet married and therefore has no children to take her future task seriously.

The proverb is considered women's wisdom. In no way does the proverb advise against having children.

M14.6 ¹¹⁵⁸ *αφφι δακωυδ γαλιγμα, ναραρ νουτιν ραλ ωερκεμμα.*

affi jakuud galigma, nahaar nuutin haal weerkemma.

affi jakuud galig-ma ...

child stew resemble-COP

nahaar nuutin haal weer=ged-ma

[day each.one state one]=INS-COP

A child resembles the stew, it is with a [different] state each day.

¹¹⁵⁶ SCHÄFER 1917: 56; MASSENBAACH 1933: 133.

¹¹⁵⁷ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli, Muḥammad Şubḥi.

¹¹⁵⁸ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Asmaa A. Kenawy.

jakuud is a slimy stew from vegetables. Its content and its price change; when fresh it is expensive, later it becomes cheap.

⇒ Some days are good, some days are bad.

M14.7 ¹¹⁵⁹ ἀΦΦΙ ΤΙΡΤΙΓΟΔΟΝ ΚΑΛΟΥ, ΤΑΛΛΕΜΝΟΥ.

affi tirtiigodon kalu, tallemnu.

affi tirtii=godon kal-u talle-munu

child owner=COM eat-3SG walk-NEG

kal-u Instead of *kalin* Mattokki say *kalu*.

The child eats with the owner [the parents], it does not walk [with them].

⇒ Parents and children do certain things separately.

For parents eating with little children is common, children eat less and leave enough for others. However, walking with them is difficult as they are slower or want to be carried.

M14.8 ¹¹⁶⁰ ΦΑΡΡΑΔΙ ΚΕΣΑΡΓΟΝ, ΜΕΚΚΙ Ιᾶ Οἶρα?

farraadi kesargon, meekki iā oyra?

farraadi kes-ar=gon meekki aag oy-r-a

only.child pester-NR=CO Q:ACC PROG weep-NEUT-3PL

And the only child pestering, with whom do they weep?

⇒ It is difficult for a mother to have only one child, especially if it behaves badly.

M14.9 ¹¹⁶¹ ΕΚΚ ᾶ ΤΙCЦИΛ, ΙΝΩΙΛΙΔΤΟΝ ᾶ ΤΙCЦИ.

ekk aa tissil, inwilidton aa tissi.

¹¹⁵⁹ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with the female relatives of ‘Az al-Dīn Qāsīm, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm. They extend the second clause to *girro tallemnu* meaning ‘it does not walk on the way [with them]’.

¹¹⁶⁰ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Asmaa A. Kenawy. She replaces *meekki* by *niiged*.

¹¹⁶¹ From Fawzi Ṭāhīr, Seyaale; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

er=gi aag tissi-il ...
 2SG=ACC PROG hate-PTC:IPF
in-wilid=gon aag tissi-Ø
 2SG:POSS-children=CO PROG hate-3SG

The one who hates you, also hates your children.

wilid (Ar. loanword) has *toni(i)* as Nubian synonym.

⇒ Without exception, one either loves or hates the whole family.

In Nubia friendships may be inherited. When parents die one easily becomes the friend of their children.

M14.10 ¹¹⁶² *BOYPOY IΩKAPTIMΔ.*

buru ishkartima.

buru ishkarti-ma

daughter guest-COP

A daughter is [like] a guest.

⇒ Everything is done for a daughter.

⇒ I am still caring for my unmarried daughter.

M14.11 ¹¹⁶³ *αΩαM αῖ αMBāBN BOYPOY, IKKE TERE, ā WĒPA.*

asham ay ambaabn buru, ikke tere, aa weera.

asham ay am-baab=na buru ...

well.mannered 1SG 1PL:POSS-father=GEN daughter

ikke tere aag wee-r-a

ADV DEM PROG say-NEUT-3PL

Well mannered, I am our father's daughter, like this, they [the people] say.

⇒ Your slandering about me is not right.

¹¹⁶² From Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with 'Ali Aḥmad.

¹¹⁶³ From 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Raūf's wife, Dakke; co-investigated with 'Amm Sali's wife, Muḥammad Jabāli. The people from Dakke replace *asham* by *hashaa*.

M14.12 ¹¹⁶⁴ *IMBĀB MALLE IMBĀBRĒ?*

imbaab malle imbaabree?

im-baab malle im-baab-ree

2PL:POSS-father all 2PL:POSS-father-Q:NEUT

Are all your fathers [i.e. older people] your father?

⇒ Don't take something (as advice) from someone unrelated.

M14.13 ¹¹⁶⁵ *ANN IDNĀ GABOY ḌŌC WĀLĀN AMBĀBNA ḌŌḠ.*

ann idna gabu joos walan ambaabna hoosh.

anna id=na gabu joos ...

1SG:POSS husband=GEN vault.of.house couple

walan am-baab=na hoosh

CO:NEG 1PL:POSS-father=GEN courtyard

My husband's few vaults [rooms] and not our father's courtyard.

gabu means the barrel-vault of Mattokki mud brick houses, arching one room. It offers some privacy.

hoosh The courtyard is considered one of the nicest places in the house, especially in the evening.

⇒ Encouragement to a woman to stay with her husband.

The proverb is said by a married woman to another married woman.

M14.14 ¹¹⁶⁶ *AMBĀBNA ḌAḌĀB ḌOGŌP TENNA NAḌĀC GENOY.*

ambaabna dahab dogoor tenna nahaas genu.

am-baab=na dahab dogoor ...

1PL:POSS-father=GEN gold COMP

tenna nahaas gen-u

3SG:POSS copper better-COP

¹¹⁶⁴ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi.

¹¹⁶⁵ From 'Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

¹¹⁶⁶ From Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

His [my husband's] copper is better than our father's gold.

dahab ... *nahaas* are Arabic loanwords possibly pointing to a later origin than the proverb before.

dogoor usually occurs after the GEN clitic =*na* that in Mattokki is frequently not pronounced.

⇒ Encouragement to a woman to stay with her husband.

The proverb is said by one married woman to another married woman.

M14.15 ¹¹⁶⁷ *AMBĀBKI BĒPEΔ ĀΓIΛ KĀBIP TĀKI, KĀ TŌYΡ BŌYΛΓI OYCKOYPTIPOY.*

ambaabki beered aagil kaacir taaki, kaa tuur buulgi uskurtiru.

am-baab=*gi* *beer-ed aag-il* ...

1PL:POSS-father=ACC kill-PFV PROG-PTC:IPF

kaa-ci=ro *taar-ki* *kaa* *tuur* ...

house-PL=LOC come-COND [house inside

buu-il=gi *uskur-tir-u*

STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC put-2/3REC-IMP:SG

[The mother says to the son:] When the one who has killed our father comes to the house, give him what exists inside the house.

kaaci When Mattokki speak about their own home, they frequently say *kaa* in the plural as a home consists of a couple of houses besides the courtyard.

kaa tuu buu Nubian research participants discussed whether it might be a metaphor for ‘ash’ admonishing to give the enemy the ash of the house. Later I received a phone call from the group, confirming the meaning ‘what exists in the house’, and linking it to the Christian past.

⇒ Provide the guest with everything, even if he is an enemy.

⇒ I am caring for my married daughter who comes for a visit.

¹¹⁶⁷ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Abd al-Qādir, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Jamāl ‘Abd al-Jalīl.

That at least some Nubians have been following the advice to provide even for the enemy is proved by the following Andaandi Nubian prayer:

Prayer $\Delta\text{N}\Delta\text{I } \text{C}\alpha\lambda\bar{\alpha}\text{M}\alpha - \text{I}\text{P}\text{IN } \text{T}\bar{\text{O}}\Delta \text{C}\alpha\lambda\bar{\alpha}\text{M}\alpha - \Delta\Delta\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\text{N } \text{T}\bar{\text{O}}\Delta$
 $\text{C}\alpha\lambda\bar{\alpha}\text{M}\alpha - \text{C}\alpha\text{Z}\text{IB } \text{T}\bar{\text{O}}\Delta \text{C}\alpha\lambda\bar{\alpha}\text{M}\alpha.$
andi salaama – irin tood salaama – aduun tood salaama –
sahib tood salaama.
andi salaama – iri=n tood ...
 1SG:POSS peace – people=GEN son ...
 – *aduun=n tood ... – sahib tood ...*
 – enemy=GEN son ... – friend son ...
 To me peace – to the child that behaves well peace –
 to the enemy’s child peace – to the friend’s child peace.¹¹⁶⁸

Note that the enemy is named before the friend, because that is how he can become a friend.

M14.16 ¹¹⁶⁹ $\text{IN}\Delta\text{I } \Delta\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{G}}\text{M}\bar{\text{E}}\text{C}\Delta\text{N}, \text{IN}\bar{\text{E}}\text{N } \text{EKKI } \text{IN}\Delta\text{I } \Delta\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{G}}\text{KOMNOY}.$
inji doogmeesan, ineen ekki inji doogkomnu.
inji doog-mee-s-an
 carry kiss-NEG-PRT2-3PL
in-een er=gi inji doog-ko-munu
 2SG:POSS-mother 2SG=ACC rise kiss-PRT1-NEG
 They did not rise and kiss [you], [even] your mother did not
 rise and kiss you.

inji doog If a child is not well behaved it is assumed that it was not raised
 and kissed enough.

⇒ You have done something bad.

The proverb is said by women to a teenage child, not to a little child. While men know it, they do not use it.

¹¹⁶⁸ Thourya Muḥammad 2022, p.c., who heard it from her mother; Aḥmad Sāti 2023, p.c. For *irin tood*, see H209 in semantic domain 34 ‘Andaandi Words used by Wise Men’.

¹¹⁶⁹ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

4.15. Kinship: Women and Wives

In an earlier publication I consider the full range of Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs from all semantic domains that describe a woman's life past and present.¹¹⁷⁰ While some of the proverbs may sound oppressive and seem to portray Nubian women similar to the Orientalist stereotype "as passive and submissive beings shackled by male authorities,"¹¹⁷¹ other proverbs strongly emphasise women's agency. My earlier publication adds a number of examples from daily Nubian life that confirm that women's agency was "far richer and more complex than past narratives suggested".¹¹⁷² Already in the past,

[t]he Kushite monarchy was perhaps matrilineal; there were at least five reigning queens. Kushite royal women had very high status and queens' tombs in the royal cemeteries contained great wealth.¹¹⁷³

The Kushite king's mother, with the honorary title of 'Kandake', became the guarantor of the divine succession.¹¹⁷⁴ A *κανδάκη* is mentioned in the Greek New Testament.¹¹⁷⁵ During the medieval Nubian Christian period, one of the most depicted and honoured human beings was Mary, the mother of Jesus.¹¹⁷⁶ The main actor in the longest surviving text in the Old Nubian language, 'The Miracle of Saint Mina', is a woman as well.¹¹⁷⁷

In Nubia it is rarely imagined to stay unmarried. An unmarried woman is regarded as dangerous for the village. Indeed, one is really only considered to be a woman (*een*) after marriage.¹¹⁷⁸ She is expected to become a mother soon. One Dongolawi artist describes her mother and the wife's position in

¹¹⁷⁰ JAEGER 2018.

¹¹⁷¹ MAHMOOD 2005: 6.

¹¹⁷² MAHMOOD 2005: 6.

¹¹⁷³ JENNINGS 2009: 24; referring to the Napatan period around the 8th cent. BC.

¹¹⁷⁴ SCHOLZ 2006: 137; more about a Kandake's position in SCHOLZ 2006: 144-146.

¹¹⁷⁵ The Holy Bible, New Testament, Acts 8: 27.

¹¹⁷⁶ WERNER 2013: 367-372.

¹¹⁷⁷ EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and VAN GERVEN OEI 2012.

¹¹⁷⁸ Hāmīd Khabīr 2016, p.c. Cf. CROWFOOT 1922 for a full description of the wedding rites in the Dongola Reach about a century ago.

the family: My mother is precious, she is my life, shows me the way, combs my hair. It's her responsibility to help me to become perfect. – The wife sits in the family's driving seat. She decides the daily tasks.¹¹⁷⁹

Some Nubians express a woman's agency in a similar way. They are aware that women deal well or even better with financial responsibilities than men. When subscribing to a monthly money sharing pool they can acquire household goods for the family, which are otherwise out of reach for the average Nubian. In some cases they even buy gold, accumulate it with the payout from further money sharing pools, and finally use it to buy a house. Alternatively, a woman works at home, but in such a way that she also earns money.¹¹⁸⁰

Nubian women desire the freedom to form families that work for the good of the whole village.¹¹⁸¹ Being veiled with a *tōb*, the Sudanese women's outer garment,¹¹⁸² or with a *hijāb*, where head, hair and frequently the neck are covered,¹¹⁸³ signifies a Nubian woman to be respectable. While this may sound strange “in terms of standard [secular] models”, this can be understood when an ethical formation based on “divinity, and virtue” leading toward moral actions is considered. In this case “achieving the subject's potentiality” may include “submission to certain forms of (external) authority”.¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁷⁹ Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c.

¹¹⁸⁰ MAHER HABBOB 2018; Mattokki man in Gurte 2 2017, p.c.; Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c.

¹¹⁸¹ A goal similar to Native- and African American feminists, as explained in MAHMOOD 2005: 13.

¹¹⁸² “It consists of a nine-metre long piece of fabric that is wrapped around the body and head; the face is not covered.” (ISMAIL and MAKKI 1990: 175) – In the German original: “Es besteht aus einem neun Meter langen Stoffstück, das um den Körper und den Kopf gewunden wird; dabei wird das Gesicht nicht bedeckt.”

¹¹⁸³ TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 76+217.

¹¹⁸⁴ MAHMOOD 2005: 16+31. More details in MAHMOOD 2006. Agency based on religious motives belongs to the background for my approach toward faith in research as presented in section 2.3.7. Of course, religious aspects do not play a role for every Nubian woman, instead it can purely be a matter of conforming to society.

The high and honourable position of the Sudanese *ħabbooba*, denoting a grandmother, but also any elderly woman,¹¹⁸⁵ is striking. The same Dongolawi artist said about her grandmother: The grandmother is the softer side of the mother. She is holy, more than a normal person.¹¹⁸⁶

Since Nubia has become Islamic it can be a challenge to share one's husband with another woman.¹¹⁸⁷ Divorce is unusual, however increasing.¹¹⁸⁸

The following proverbs describe women and wives in all their diversity. The difference between a woman who is compared favourably to a 'water trough' and another woman compared less favourably to a 'weak rope' may reflect some sort of shift in women's status, bearing in mind that most Nubian proverbs reflect women's life prior to the *ħijra* and globalisation when Nubian women were less segregated than their Arab sisters.¹¹⁸⁹

A15.1 ¹¹⁹⁰ *ΕΔΚΙΝ, ΒΟΥΡΟΥΝ ΤΙΝΕΝΓΙ ΕΔ!*
edkin, burun tineengi ed!

¹¹⁸⁵ TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 69.

¹¹⁸⁶ Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c.

¹¹⁸⁷ As expressed by some Nubian women whom my wife met. In other cases, it can result in a happy marriage, as Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c. Her mother was a second wife.

¹¹⁸⁸ Nubian men discourage divorce and do not speak well about other men who divorce their wives. (Ja'far Muħammad 2002, p.c.; Šabri Aħmad 2014, p.c.; Maher Habbob 2022, p.c.). – Among the Dilling Nubians in the Nuba Mountains one tries to keep divorce secret as long as possible. (Khalīfa Jabreldar 2009, p.c.).

¹¹⁸⁹ FERNEA 1970: 137: [when arriving at a village in Lower Nubia] "With several Nubian men, he [Robert Fernea] stood to one side, not exactly mixing with the women but not exactly excluded from their presence, either. This was apparently going to be a different situation than in Iraq, where the village men and women were socially segregated." According to the late Nubian women's rights activist Prof Suad Ibrahim Ahmed the strong separation between men and women among Sudanese Nubians had only come into being during the rule of the National Islamic Front.

¹¹⁹⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 91; and 2016: proverb 90); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 28: "Don't marry the girl, but her mother."

ed-ki-n ...

marry-COND-2SG

buru=n tin-een=gi ed-Ø

daughter=GEN 3SG:POSS-mother=ACC marry-IMP:SG

When you [male person] marry, [you] marry the daughter's mother!

- ⇒ Look at the characteristics of the bride's mother. Her daughter will be similar.
- ⇒ Besides his own bride, a husband also gets married to the bride's family, and especially his mother-in-law.
- ⇒ Marriage in African cultures is first and foremost a binding between two families, and not between two individuals.

A15.2 ¹¹⁹¹ *ĒN OGIDN OGIR ΔΟΥΛ ΑΝΙΝ.*

een ogijn ogir duul anin.

een ogij=n og-ir duul an-in

woman man=GEN breast=LOC old INCH-3SG

The woman becomes old [grows up] on her husband's chest.

- ⇒ Young girls are old enough to get married.

A15.3 ¹¹⁹² *ĒN KĀN CΑΒΛΟ ΤΑΝΝΑΝ.*

een kaan sablo tannan.

een kaa=n sablo tannan

wife house=GEN trough COP

The wife is [like] the large water trough of the house.

- kaa* Besides the building itself 'house' means the (extended) family, as described in semantic domain 22 'House and Household'.
- sablo* is the large water trough that connects to the waterwheel. Without it there is no agriculture, no survival possible.

¹¹⁹¹ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography.

¹¹⁹² From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 30); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah, Muḥammad Sharīf, Fu'ād 'Akūd.

- ⇒ The wife rules the house.
 ⇒ Nothing in the house happens without the wife being involved.
 English: The wife wears the trousers.¹¹⁹³

A15.4 ¹¹⁹⁴ *ĒN φᾶλα ἀΝΚΙΝ, ὠᾶσογι ἐccin cελλερ ὤεΓιν.*

een faala ankin, waasogi essin seller shegin.

een faala an-ki-n ...

woman skilful INCH-COND-3SG

waaso=gi essi=n selle=r sheg-in

leveller=ACC water=GEN centre=LOC put.in-3SG

When a woman becomes skilful, she puts the toothless rake in the centre of the water.

waaso (also *waasu*) is a toothless rake for levelling and smoothing farmland for basin irrigation. One or two farmers draw it, followed by the head farmer (*samed*). A Nubian woman would not do that kind of work.¹¹⁹⁵

- ⇒ A woman has been created for certain kinds of work. Don't force her to do other work.

The proverb describes the division of labour between the sexes, a negative stereotype of women is not intended. Women's chores were picking vegetables, separating wheat from chaff and milking the goats. In a real-life situation a farmer sent his wife to milk the cows, considered to be a man's job. She could not do it. Then the farmer said the proverb.¹¹⁹⁶

variant *waasogi essin seller shegin.*

He pierces the leveller in the centre of the water.

- ⇒ He tries to do something foolish or impossible.

¹¹⁹³ Derek Cheeseman 2023, p.c.: “[T]his expression usually implies criticism ..., suggesting that the husband is weak.” This is not implied in the Nubian proverb.

¹¹⁹⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 218); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein. The more general variant is from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI.

¹¹⁹⁵ Cf. TAHA A. TAHA 2012: 10. In SCA *waaso* becomes *wasog*.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ḥāmid Khabīr 2019, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza (2019, p.c.) talking about his mother.

English: He tries to draw water with a sieve.

A15.5 ¹¹⁹⁷ *ĒNGI TIŪPIΓED ΔOM!*

eengi tiwriged jom!

een=gi tiwri=ged jom-Ø

woman=ACC friend=INS beat-IMP:SG

Beat the [unruly] wife with a friend!

tiwri symbolises another wife: Beat the wife with another wife!

⇒ If your wife does not treat you well and becomes disobedient, do not physically beat her, but look for another kind of punishment, such as marrying another one.

Literally beating a wife is frowned upon in Sudanese society: “A man who beats his wife loses his standing in society and the woman who accepts it loses her dignity.”¹¹⁹⁸

MSA: . اضرب النساء بالنساء ولا تضربهن بالعصا – “Punish women with women, and not by hitting them with a stick.”

SCA: . للمرة كان قلت ادبها دقها باختها.

“If a woman shows disrespect, punish her with another woman.”

A15.5 and the Arabic proverbs encourage a different behaviour than A13.3 that warns against the consequences of marrying an additional wife.

A15.6 ¹¹⁹⁹ *ĒN OΔΔIKIN, ZOYPOYΔN KOYBKIPĪN.*

een oddikin, hurujn kubkiriin.

¹¹⁹⁷ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 225. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 248.

¹¹⁹⁸ ISMAIL and MAKKI 1990: 18; in the German original: “Ein Mann, der seine Frau schlägt, verliert sein Ansehen in der Gesellschaft und die Frau, die es akzeptiert, ihre Würde.”

¹¹⁹⁹ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 221); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Hamed, Tamador Gibreel. Hāmid Khabīr received the proverb from Yāsīn Hisēn (Surtood).

een oddi-ki-n ...
 woman be.ill-COND-3SG
huruj=n kub=kirii-n
 faidherbia=GEN boat=SIM-COP

When a woman is ill, she is similar to the boat [made] of faidherbia wood.

huruj is the faidherbia tree.¹²⁰⁰ In autumn, its leaves become dry and fall off; in winter they turn completely green again. The weight of its wood is very light, absorbs water and cracks and sinks easily. A boat made from it is difficult to steer and control. Also, worms destroy the wood within three or four months. Therefore, building boats with wood from the *sant* acacia tree is preferable.¹²⁰¹

- ⇒ The body of a weak person cannot resist an illness, just as a boat from faidherbia wood is not water resistant.
- ⇒ A sick woman needs to be treated carefully. Fire or any strong treatment cannot be used to cure her.
- ⇒ Just as one needs a strong boat to have economic stability in life, one also needs a strong wife.

A15.7 ¹²⁰² *ĒNGON OΥΛΟΥΓΚΕΔ ΔΟΥΡΑΝΙΝ, ΟΓΙΣΚΟΝ ΣΟΡΙΥΓΕΔ ΔΟΥΡΑΝΙΝ.*

eengon ulugked duranin, ogijkon sorinyged duranin.

een=gon ulug=ged duran-in ...
 woman=CO ear=INS get.old-3SG
ogij=gon soriny=ged duran-in
 man=CO nose=INS get.old-3SG

¹²⁰⁰ The lexeme is missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965] and MASSENBACH 1933.

¹²⁰¹ ‘Alā al-Dīn Khayrī 2017, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹²⁰² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 220); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Ordesse Ḥamed.

As the woman [wife] gets old with her ear, the man [husband] gets old with his nose.

⇒ Don't offend your wife verbally, otherwise she neglects her household chores and you will smell it.

A15.8 ¹²⁰³ *αρ ιργι σοϊιβ ιρβ̄εμεν δ̄οψκοροϋ.*

ar irgi soyib irbeemen doonykoru.

ar ir=gi soyib irbee=men doony-kor-u

1PL 2PL=ACC running tiredness=NEG look.after-PRT1-1PL

[Children say to their mother:] We look after you constantly running backward and forward without tiredness.

ir The mother is addressed in a polite way.

soyib means 'running forwards and backwards constantly'.

⇒ A mother who has raised her children expects them to care for her when she gets elderly.

Adults did most of the agricultural work, children helped with cutting the grass and a few other minor chores. Later in life parents expected their children to reciprocate for the care they had received at a young age by supporting them.

M15.1 ¹²⁰⁴ *εΔΚΙΝ, ΒΟΥΡΟΥΝ ΤΙΝ̄ΕΝΓΙ ΕΔ!*

edkin, burun tineengi ed!

ed-ki-n ...

marry-COND-2SG

buru=na tin-eeen=gi ed-Ø

daughter=GEN 3SG:POSS-mother=ACC marry-IMP:SG

When you [male person] marry, [you] marry the daughter's mother!

¹²⁰³ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 202).

¹²⁰⁴ From 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm, Dakke and Heesa Island. For *burun tineen* see the explanation for A15.1.

- ⇒ Look at the characteristics of the bride's mother. Her daughter will have the same characteristics.
- ⇒ Besides his own bride, a husband gets married to the bride's family, and especially his mother-in-law.

While the following quote describes a Mattokki practice nearly 100 years ago, a Nubian mother-in-law still occupies a position of respect:

The custom that the mother-in-law should not speak with her son-in-law is also observed carefully in the Kunūzi area, even when the elderly mother-in-law has been living in her daughter's home for years. It ... is considered a sign of deference. We also noted that when he returned from a journey the son-in-law brought back his choicest gift for his mother-in-law. At the wedding, too, the bride's mother is an important person.¹²⁰⁵

M15.2 ¹²⁰⁶ *ĒN KĀNA ḌABITĒPA.*

een kaana jabitera.

een kaa=na jabi-tera

wife house=GEN channel-COP

The wife is [like] the channel of the house.

- ⇒ The wife brings everything good to the house.

The proverb counters other peoples' negative talk about women.

¹²⁰⁵ MASSENBACH 1962: 110; in the German original: "Die Sitte, daß die Schwiegermutter nicht mit dem Schwiegersohn reden darf, wird auch im Kunūzi-Gebiet sorgfältig beobachtet, selbst wenn die Schwiegermutter als alte Frau seit Jahren im Hause der Tochter wohnt. Das ... gilt als Zeichen der Ehrerbietung. So beobachten wir es auch, daß bei der Heimkehr von einer Reise der Schwiegersohn das schönste Geschenk für seine Schwiegermutter mitbrachte. Auch bei der Heirat ist die Mutter der Braut eine wichtige Person."

¹²⁰⁶ From Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke.

M15.3 ¹²⁰⁷ *ENNA CIRPIGI ĒN MOYMOYΔWĒPKI TIPKI, TER ā NEΔ KŌΛ
ANI.*

enna sirrigi een mumudweerki tirki, ter aa nedkool ani.

enna sirri=gi een mumud=weer=gi ...

2SG:POSS secret=ACC woman dumb=INDF=ACC

tir-ki ter aag ned-kool an-i

give2/3-COND 3SG PROG tongue-ADJR INCH-3SG

When you give your secret [to] a dumb woman, she [certainly] becomes having a tongue.

tir Mattokki as well as Andaandi differentiate between *tir* ‘give.you’ or ‘give.him/her’ and *deen* ‘give.me’. I do the same.

⇒ Women meddle in everything. They interfere in matters that are none of their business.

M15.4 ¹²⁰⁸ *WAIĒ, ĒBIFI KADAGEΔ ĀCMEWE!*

waye, eecigi kadaged aasmewe!

waye-∅ ...

be.careful-IMP:PL

een-ci=gi kada=ged aas-me-we

woman-PL=ACC measurement=INS measure-IMP:NEG-PL

Be careful, do not measure women with the *kada* measurement!

kada is a Nubian measurement unit of volume for grain, equalling three *barras*,¹²⁰⁹ nowadays out of use.

⇒ Women have and do things men/husbands do not understand.

⇒ Women have their own rules.

¹²⁰⁷ From Muḥammad, Debood; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi, Asmaa A. Kenawy. The last one adds the meaning of certainty to *an*.

¹²⁰⁸ From MUḤAMMAD ŠUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi, Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹²⁰⁹ MASSENBAACH 1933: 182

M15.5 ¹²¹⁰ *ĒḂIN OYΛΟΥΓ ΚΟΥC BŌŪ.*

eecin ulug kus buu.

een-ci=na ulug kus buu-Ø
 woman-PL=GEN ear open STAT-3SG

The ear(s) of women are open.

⇒ Women meddle in everything. They interfere in matters that are none of their business.

The proverb can be said when women want more than men, like when a husband is satisfied with two *jallābiya*, yet his wife wants a lot more garments.

M15.6 ¹²¹¹ *ωĒΡΚΙ ΕΝΝ ΙΔ ΕΔΟCCOY, ωŌ NĀΦŌŪΡΑ, ωŌ ΓĪΜΑ ΚΙΝΝΙ.*

weerki enn id edosu, woo naafuura, woo giima kinni.

weer=gi enna id ed-os-s-u ...
 one=ACC 2SG:POSShusband marry-PFV-PRT2-3SG

woo naafuura woo giima kinni
 INT woman INT value without

Your husband married one [another wife], o woman, o worthless woman.

naafuura (Ar. loanword) is a woman who is married yet living separated from her husband.

⇒ If you had been a well-behaved wife your husband would not have married a second one.

The proverb is said to a wife whose husband has married for the second time.

M15.7 ¹²¹² *ΑΝΝΑ ΤΙΩΡΙ*

anna tiwri

anna tiwri

1SG:POSS friend

¹²¹⁰ From St49; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. Cf. A19.15.

¹²¹¹ From Sayid al-Ḥasan, Aniiba; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹²¹² From Khālid Karār, Seyaale. The proverb is said by a woman.

my friend

⇒ This woman has the same husband as me.

4.16. Kinship: Other Relatives

In extended families, as favoured by many Nubians, each family member is assigned certain roles. In general, Nubians respect, love and feel closer to their maternal relatives, i.e. their maternal aunt (*kegid*) and their children, than to their paternal ones, i.e. their paternal aunt (*baanessi*) and their children. The former one is also said to be more kind to a girl than the latter. Among the Mattokki, when punished, children were not beaten by their mother, but by their maternal aunt (*kegid*).¹²¹³ In many aspects a maternal uncle (*gii*) is like one's own father, or bears even more responsibility than the father. Especially in times of difficulties he is approached.

Elderly relatives are shown high respect with the starting age of being considered 'old' earlier than in Europe due to higher birth rate and lower life expectancy. Physical fitness in the Sudan is said to decline from the age of 43.¹²¹⁴ Anybody who has passed this age quickly reaches the time when they should behave like an experienced and trustworthy elder.

Usually every villager knows one's relationships with other kin from the same village and the conferred obligations. When meeting another Nubian for the first time, clarifying family relationships is high on the agenda. However, with the number of Nubians increasing and moving to urban centres and even onward to other countries, kinship has become more difficult to trace. Instead, in one Andaandi village inhabitants began drawing a tree diagram representing their family relationships.

A16.1 ¹²¹⁵ *ḡāḡa TIMBECKI KŌMOYNOY.*

haaja timbeski koomunu.

¹²¹³ Bibi Banna 2000, p.c. I speak in the past tense as that seems to have changed.

¹²¹⁴ Abāthīr 'Abdullahi 2009, p.c.

¹²¹⁵ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 72; and 2016: proverb 71); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

haaja tim-bes=gi koor-munu
 thing 3SG:POSS-brother=ACC have-NEG

The thing [money] does not have a brother.

haaja (Ar. loanword) literally means ‘thing’. ‘money’ is *dungus*. Before Nubia became more closely involved in the national and global economy, among the common people dates were the preferred means of financial transaction.¹²¹⁶

⇒ He has suddenly become rich and forgets his relatives and former friends who are in need.

A16.2 ¹²¹⁷ *ΔΙΟΝ ΕΛΜΕΝΚΙΡΙ, ΔΜΒΕC ΩΕΡΟΝ ΕΛΕΛ.*

ayon elmenkiri, ambes weeron elel.

ay=on el-men-ki-r-i ...

1SG=CO:COND find-NEG-COND-NEUT-1SG

am-bes=weer-on el-el

1SG:POSS-brother=INDF-OPT find-PTC:PF

If I did not find [it], I wish [it be] a brother of mine who finds.

⇒ I lost a good opportunity.

A16.3 ¹²¹⁸ *ΙΜΒΕC ΙΦΙΤΤΕΛ ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΚΑCΚΙ ΓΑΨΜΕΝ!*

imbes ingittel tokkon kassi gaanymen!

im-bes ingittel tokkon ...

2SG:POSS-brother sweet IMP:NEG ...

kassi gaanymen

whitewash lick-IMP:NEG

Just do not whitewash and lick your sweet brother!

⇒ If someone is very good to you, don’t take advantage of him.

¹²¹⁶ al-Amīn Muḥammad 2015, p.c. Cf. semantic domain 23.

¹²¹⁷ From ‘Ali Uthmān, Magaasir Island. He considers it more a wisdom saying than a proverb.

¹²¹⁸ From ‘Abd al-İllah ‘Abd al-Rāziq, Magaasir Island; co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

shay Tea is compared to a maternal uncle. While originally tea was not a Nubian drink and *shay* an Arabic loanword, drinking tea became a significant Nubian social practice. It is consumed several times a day preferably with friends. Tea needs to be drunk in a certain way; if done differently the tea is considered to be humiliated.

⇒ Drinking tea is most important, like the mother's brother.

A16.6 ¹²²¹ ΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΚΟΜΕΝΙΛ, ΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΔΑΝΙΝ.

duulgi koomenil, duulgi jaanin.

duul=gi koor-men-il duul=gi jaan-in

old=ACC have-NEG-PTC:IPF old=ACC buy-3SG

The one who does not have an elder person [relative], buys the elder person.

⇒ The wisdom of the elderly is important for any community, more important than money.

SCA: .الما عندو كبير يشتري ليهو كبير.

“The one who does not have an elder should buy himself one.”

ECA: .إللي مالوش كبير، يشتريلو كبير.

“The one who does not have an elder he buys an elder.”

A16.7 ¹²²² ΓΟΔΑΡΝ ΙΡΙ

godarn iri

godar=n iri

<material>=GEN people

people of *godar* material

¹²²¹ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 547.

¹²²² From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 20); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Kamal Hussein.

godar is a material similar to a thread that is used to mend a hole in clothing or in a boat.

⇒ The elderly can still do small yet important tasks.

The elderly are especially called in when some work needs many hands. They show readiness to help.

M16.1 ¹²²³ *ΒΟΥΡΟΥ ΤΙΜΒΑΝΕΚΚΙΝ ΙΝΑ CŌΠΡΟ ἄ Βᾶς ΒŌῩ.*

buru timbaanessin iina soorro aa baaj buu.

buru tim-baanessi=na ii=na ...

girl 3SG:POSS-father.sister=GEN hand=GEN

soor-ro aag baaj buu-Ø

writing-LOC PROG write STAT-3SG

The girl, the writing of her paternal aunt's hand is inscribed [on her].

soor During the Christian period a cross was 'written' (tattooed) on a Nubian's wrist, as Copts still do today. The proverb uses that kind of 'writing' as a metaphor.

⇒ The girl becomes like her paternal aunt.

variant *buru timbaanessin ossir aa beli.*

The girl gets out from the leg of her paternal aunt.

If a girl is considered to be like her paternal aunt, it means that she is not behaving well. Instead, she should become like her maternal aunt. – Compare this proverb and A15.1 where the girl has her mother's characteristics instead of her paternal aunt's.

M16.2 ¹²²⁴ *ἈΜΒΑΝΕΚΚΙ ΦΙΤΤΙΝ ἈΡΙΚΚΙ, ἈΝΔΙ ΚΕΓΙΑ, Ἰᾶ ΚΕΓΙΑ, ἸΜΒᾶψα.*

¹²²³ From Fathī 'Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; variant from Zīzī Şiyām. Aḥmad 'Ali shortens *iina soorro* to *iir*.

¹²²⁴ From Muḥammad Maḥmūd, Gerf Hissein; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Muḥammad Şubḥi. The latter felt very happy when hearing the proverb as it is typical for Nubian culture.

ambaanessi fittin arissi, andi kegid, yaa kegid, imbaasha.

am-baanessi fitti=na arissi ...

1SG:POSS-father.sister unleavened.bread=GEN dried

andi kegid yaa kegid im-baasha

1SG:POSS mother.sister INT mo.si 2SG:POSS-pasha

My paternal aunt is as dried bread, my maternal aunt, oh maternal aunt, your pasha.

fitti is a short form of *kal fitti*

arissi ... baasha The proverb adds one Fadijja and one Arabic word to its basic Mattokki structure.

⇒ Maternal relatives are more important than paternal ones.

⇒ The maternal aunt is the most important relative.

M16.3 ¹²²⁵ *INNOFO EKK Ā TICCI.*

innogo ekk aa tissi.

inn-ogo ekki aag tissi.

2SG:POSS-mother.in.law 2SG:ACC TAM hate

Your mother-in-law hates you.

⇒ You are late for the meal.

⇒ You are not taking care of your wife/child.

Most Nubian mothers do not hate their sons, even if they behave very badly. Instead, they will pray for their sons, yet not mention it to anybody. A mother-in-law will look for a wise man and ask him to help her solve the problem.

When a husband beats his wife and she returns to her parents / the husband's parents-in-law, one of the wife's relatives will approach the husband and discuss the matter with him. In this context the proverb is uttered. If a solution is found the wife returns to her husband. Due to the principle of *sutera*, the problem is not mentioned outside of either the husband's or the wife's family.

¹²²⁵ From Khayria Mūsa, Maharraga; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Ali who explained the proverb in detail.

The last aspect is taken very seriously. When I visited a Nubian man where his wife had been away for a couple of days, staying with her family, I was invited to phone the wife who assured me that everything was fine.

M16.4 ¹²²⁶ ΔΟΥΛΓΙ ΚΟΜΕΝΙΛ, ΔΟΥΛΩΕΡΚΙ ΔΑΝ.

duulgi koomenil, duulweerki jaan.

duul=gi koor-men-il duul=weer=gi jaan-Ø

old=ACC have-NEG-PTC:IPF old=INDF=ACC buy-3SG

The one who does not have an elder person [relative], buys an elder person.

⇒ The wisdom of the elderly is important for any community, more important than money or possessions.

4.17. Hospitality

Hospitality has a religious dimension to it and should be understood from this perspective. One Dongolawi remembers his pious father, who after two or three days of not receiving any guest (*ishkarti*), asked God what he had failed. Surely otherwise God would have sent a guest. Providing food is part of hospitality, because food is from God and what one has been given by God must be passed on.¹²²⁷

As a result, in the average Nubian village “[t]he guest was highly valued and it was an honor to have guests in the house”¹²²⁸ and travelling in Nubia was considered safe:

It is indeed true that the Nubians are poor, in the fullest sense of the word; however, that will never prevent them from showing hospitality

¹²²⁶ From al-Ḥajj ‘Awaḍ ‘Ali, Abuhoor.

¹²²⁷ Umm Ḥamdi 2002, p.c.; Muḥammad Ḥasan 2009, p.c.; Walīd Ragab 2022, p.c.; SIDDQUI (2015: 10+122) speaks of a theology of hospitality inspired by Abraham. Underlying is the idea that “Creation expresses God’s hospitality.” In an oral history the Muslim saint Khidr taught Nubians about hospitality (Aḥmad ‘Ali 2022, p.c.).

¹²²⁸ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 145. – Hospitality and honour in an North African society is also dealt with in BOURDIEU 1966: 232.

and generosity. This means that anybody may venture to travel through Nubia without risk of danger to life or possessions;¹²²⁹

Hospitality is a special kind of generosity, and “the generous should be prepared to sacrifice anything except his honour for his guest’s comfort.”¹²³⁰

When travelling as an outsider on public transport to a Nubian village, Nubian fellow travellers usually inquire about one’s whereabouts, nowadays less than in the early 2000s. Sometimes after hearing my destination one of the passengers going to the same village would pay the fare and take me along to my host. Being with someone who knows the village ensures the guest’s security. If anything befalls the guest the whole village would feel ashamed.

¹²²⁹ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1909: 15; in the German original: “Es ist wahr, sie sind arm in des Wortes vollster Bedeutung; aber das wird sie nicht hindern, gastfrei und großmütig zu handeln. Darum kann jeder es wagen, Nubien zu bereisen ohne Gefahr für Leben und Besitz; ...”

¹²³⁰ NORDENSTAM 1968: 86; statement by one of his Northern Sudanese students.

When Samuel Ali Hissein and Jakob Enderlin travelled from Debba to Dongola in 1913 during a time of food shortage, they had a stunning experience: “... soon the son comes, dragging an eager, fat sheep by the hand, to tell us that they are about to slaughter it for us. We refused to accept, knowing what a serious "struggle for existence" the people of that region had to wage. But the boy urged us not to refuse this gift from his mother. Then Samuel touched the sheep with his two hands as a sign that we had accepted the gift and said, ‘We have accepted the sheep and seen your hospitality and love; but we now return the gift to you, tell your mother she is an imra’a fâliha = well-meaning woman!’ With that, the son of the house was satisfied.” (ENDERLIN 1919b: 13) – In the German original: “... bald darauf kommt der Sohn, an der Hand ein eifrig, fettes Schaf nachziehend, um uns mitzuteilen, daß sie im Begriffe seien, dasselbe für uns zu schlachten. Wir verweigerten die Annahme, da wir wußten, welch ernsten „Kampf ums Dasein“ die Leute in jener Gegend zu führen hatten. Aber der Junge drang in uns, doch dieses Geschenk seiner Mutter nicht abzulehnen. Da berührte Samuel das Schaf mit seinen beiden Händen zum Zeichen, daß wir das Geschenk angenommen hatten und sagte: „Wir haben das Schaf angenommen und Eure Gastfreundschaft und Liebe gesehen; wir geben Euch aber jetzt das Geschenk wieder zurück, sage deiner Mutter, sie sei eine imra’a fâliha = gutgesinnte Frau! Damit war der Sohn des Hauses befriedigt.”

Also the villagers' security is taken care of as anybody with an evil intention does not remain unobserved.¹²³¹

Prior to the advent of modern means of communication and transportation, travellers and relatives arrived mainly unannounced. The typical visitor in Lower Nubia arrived from the river. At the main gate of a Nubian house that was directed toward the river and kept open to show that visitors were welcome, the visitor announced his arrival and then was brought to the guest room where he waited until the host came to greet him. The guest room was built in such a way that the women of the house stayed invisible.¹²³²

If the host offers perfume and the guest accepts it, host and guest become more homogenous. Incense protects the guest from the 'evil eye'. By contrast, if a house does not smell nice, the guest assumes that it is neglected.¹²³³

Some villages in the Dongola Reach offer a rest house (Ar. *kheema*)¹²³⁴ where a guest is received, nowadays much less common with only a very few left. If a visitor arrives during the day while the villagers are working in their fields, the village teacher (if there is one) or one of the elderly people is responsible for welcoming and offering hospitality until the farmers return. In turn the farmers cultivate the teacher's agricultural land.¹²³⁵

Mattokki born before *hijra* remember rest houses in Lower Nubia where guests stayed for free. When not having such a place the guest, even the unknown one, was seated next to the mosque.¹²³⁶

Later, water, tea or coffee is brought. When visiting a farmer after sunset, it is a sign of honour to offer fresh milk, considering that most farmers have only one or two cows.

¹²³¹ Cf. SIDDIQUI 2015: 5: "Offering hospitality is not only being in power but also taking risks and becoming vulnerable."

¹²³² 'Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2020, p.c.

¹²³³ Tamador Gibreel 2022, p.c.

¹²³⁴ Sudanese Arabic loanword literally meaning 'tent'. On Musanaarti Island I once experienced hospitality in a *kheema* provided by the whole village.

¹²³⁵ Abu Bakr Khayri 2019, p.c.

¹²³⁶ 'Alā' ad-Dīn Aḥmad 2016, p.c. Cf. YASSER OSMAN 1990: 215.

Due to the hot climate a traveller or any other kind of visitor only occasionally carries food. Instead, it is provided by the host, or if staying in a rest house by the dutiful villagers who take their turns. Where there is no table to place the food on, the offer to sit down on the mat is regarded as an indication that the meal is ready to be served.

A guest who does not accept such offers of tea or food is disliked:

ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙ ΝΙΜΕΚΙ ΚΑΛΜΕΚΙ ΜΙΛΛΙΜΑ.

ishkarti niiimeeki kalmeeeki millima.

The guest, if he does not drink, if he does not eat, is bad.¹²³⁷

Still, I have seen visitors returning to their home just before mealtime. Also, in the villages in the Dongola Reach prior to the advent of the telephone frequently visitors arrived shortly after a meal had been served and before tea was distributed; however, all of them came from close-by.

While waiting for the meal or afterwards, it is time for an informal chat, *wanasa*. Travelling and visiting does not only educate the traveller, but also the one offering hospitality as information and knowledge are exchanged. During my visits I am asked about other Nubian villages I visit. It works vice versa, as I experience when hosting Nubians at our home in Europe.

Until the 1980s it was usual for the women folk to come into the guest room and join a male guest to listen to the chatting and the stories. Only later did male guests and the women of the house become accustomed to being separated.¹²³⁸

At the end of a visit the host accompanies the guest to the bus stop and ensures that the correct bus or pickup is boarded. As a visitor is never unaccompanied, he, his doings and sayings do not stay unnoticed and will later be passed on and discussed in the village.¹²³⁹

Already during my first visit to a village in the Dongola Reach I was introduced to Nubian hospitality and generosity. A Dongolawi fellow

¹²³⁷ Sha‘bān Berber 2012, p.c.

¹²³⁸ Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023. p.c.

¹²³⁹ ‘Ali Aḥmad 2009, p.c.

traveller on the public Toyota pickup truck whom I had not met before paid my fare and invited me to his house for breakfast.¹²⁴⁰

When during my first visit to a Mattokki resettlement village I arrived unannounced at my host's house, Muḥammad Mīrghani ran out of the house, paid the taxi driver, took me into the guest room, turned on Sudanese TV, brought me some water to quell my thirst, plus pencil and paper so I could start at once writing up language data. He asked me about having lunch.

Some Nubians even overstep religious boundaries to treat a guest properly: After getting off public transport in a Dongolawi village I had to wait in a courtyard until I could proceed to the village where I was staying, but that was not served by public transport. I noticed that there was no man in the house, just the mother and her two daughters. So I decided it would be best to leave. But the women declared that their male relative had authorised them to have me stay until someone would get me to the next village.¹²⁴¹

Later I asked my host, a devout Muslim relative who was accustomed to speaking his mind, about the incident. He answered that such a visit was un-Islamic. But, as it was his family, he as a male relative had been present indirectly, and so the visit would have been culturally permissible.¹²⁴²

About twenty years later there was a similar incident in a Mattokki resettlement village, however with a different ending. During a cultural celebration a Mexican group performed one dance scantily clad. Young Nubians intervened. The village elders wanted to appease them, arguing that the Mexicans were guests and therefore not to be scolded. The young people told the elders off for not knowing the religious rules, showing that in their eyes hospitality was not a religious duty anymore.

¹²⁴⁰ Kabtood north of Dongola, in 2000.

¹²⁴¹ The incident occurred before the advent of easy communication by mobile phone. CALLENDER (2010: 194) describes similarly concerning pre-*hijra* Nubian women: "In villages lacking resident men or whose men happened to be away, women received outside visitors and used the formal behaviour employed by men in these circumstances."

¹²⁴² Mu'amr al-Fīl 2002, p.c.

Nowadays, an invitation to a restaurant or ‘to the market’ is possible, but most Nubians frown on it, because it is considered of less value than an invitation to one’s home.¹²⁴³

The following proverbs encourage a kind of generosity and hospitality that honours first and foremost the guest, ensures safety and security, does not dictate the conditions of the visit and enables continuing positive relations between the host’s and the guest’s villages.

A17.1 ¹²⁴⁴ *ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙ ΤΕΝΝ ΒΑCΙΛΓΙ ΕΤΤΑ.*

ishkarti tenn basilgi etta.

ishkarti tenn basil=gi etta
 guest 3SG:POSS food.for.journey=ACC bring

The guest brings his food for the journey.

⇒ When a guest comes, God will provide the food.

The proverb describes something untypical as hardly any guest would carry his own food on the journey.

A17.2 ¹²⁴⁵ *ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙΝ ΝΙΒΙΔ ΔΔΩΙΛ ΒΟΥΝ.*

ishkartin nibid dawil buun.

ishkarti=n nibid dawil buu-n
 guest=GEN mat roll.up STAT-3SG

The mat of the guest is always rolled up [ready].

⇒ The guest is welcome at any time.

⇒ A guest may stay as long as he wishes.

¹²⁴³ Rashīd Muḥammad 2005, p.c.

¹²⁴⁴ ‘ABD AL-‘AAL AHMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood, al-Amīn Muḥammad.

¹²⁴⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 54); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Ḥisayn Hamza, Fu’ād ‘Akūd, Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Ibrāhīm Muḥammad. The last one considers the proverb as ancient. The more specific variant from ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood. *dawil* can also be pronounced as *dalwi* or *dali*.

variant *ishkartin nibid dawil tarkibuun.*
The mat of the guest is rolled up and leant against [the wall]
(i.e. ready).

A17.3 ¹²⁴⁶ *ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙ ΚΟΡΙΚΟΛ.*

ishkarti korikool.

ishkarti kori-kool

guest whip-ADJR

[He is like] The guest having a whip.

⇒ He gets involved in things that do not concern him.

A17.4 ¹²⁴⁷ *ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙ ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙΓΙ ΜΟΝΙΝ.*

ishkarti ishkartigi moonon.

ishkarti ishkarti=gi moon-in

guest guest=ACC reject-3SG

The guest refuses the [other] guest.

⇒ A host may get in trouble if there are two guests who both want the same, but there is only enough available for one person. In this case, a host cannot fulfil his cultural obligation to fulfil the wishes of both guests.

A17.5 ¹²⁴⁸ *ΜΙΓΓΙ ΚΑΛΛΟΥ? ΜΙΓΓΙ ΝΙΪΡΟΥ? ΙΡΓΙ ΝΑΛΚΙΡΟΥ ΜΕΝ ΒΙ ΒΕΪΡΟΥ.*

mingi kallu? mingi niiru? irgi nalkiru men bi beeru.

mingi kal-r-u? mingi nii-r-u? ir=gi ...

Q:ACC eat-NEUT-1PL Q:ACC see-NEUT-1PL 2PL=ACC

nal-ki-r-u men bi beer-r-u

see-COND-NEUT-1PL DISC TAM satisfied-NEUT-1PL

¹²⁴⁶ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 37).

¹²⁴⁷ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 149); co-investigated with ‘Awad Ḥasan.

¹²⁴⁸ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag. The union of students from Dibela village used this verse on their 2010 calendar sheet, however, in Arabic script.

What shall we eat? What shall we drink? On the contrary [not when we eat or drink, but] when we see you, we shall be satisfied.

⇒ I am very eager to meet you. Meeting you will make me satiated and satisfied. That is why I am neither hungry nor thirsty.

When being reunited after a long period it would be culturally appropriate to offer food and drink. However, the proverb shifts the emphasis; meeting and seeing each other is more important.

M17.1 ¹²⁴⁹ *ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙΝ ΝΙΒΙΔ ΔΔΩΙΛ ΒΟΪ.*

ishkartin nibid dawil buu.

ishkarti=na nibid dawil buu-Ø

guest=GEN mat roll.up STAT-3SG

The mat of the guest is always rolled up [ready].

⇒ The guest is welcome at any time.

⇒ A guest may stay as long as he wishes.

Already more than 100 years ago this trait was described:

*nibid wēkki āwiddos āmúgran ishkárti wēr tākingôn án.*¹²⁵⁰

He left a mat spread out in case a guest came.

M17.2 ¹²⁵¹ *ωὼ ΙΩΚΑΡΤΙ, ΤΕΝΝ ΕΔΕΒΚΕ!*

woo ishkarti, tenn edebke!

woo ishkarti tenna edeb-ged

INT guest 3SG:POSS manners=INS

O the guest, with his manners!

⇒ Your guest did not behave as he should have done.

After a visit of a guest who behaved in a rude way a host may complain to his friend. The friend gives the above exclamation.

¹²⁴⁹ From Fathī ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke.

¹²⁵⁰ SCHÄFER (1917: 48.4) quoting Samuel Ali Hissein.

¹²⁵¹ From ‘Abd al-Zaher Muḥi al-Dīn, Dakke.

M17.3 ¹²⁵² *ENNA TIΩPION IFFIPi ANKIN, MALLE GIR ΓÄÏOCMEN!*

enna tiwrion ingiri ankin, malle gir gaayosmen!

enna tiwri=on ingiri an-ki-n ...

2SG:POSS friend=CO:COND sweet INCH-COND-3SG:SUB

malle gir gaay-os-men

all time lick-PFV-IMP:NEG

If your friend becomes sweet, do not lick [him] all the time!

⇒ If you have a good friend, be careful to keep the friendship.

⇒ Don't constantly request something from a good friend!

ECA: ان كان حبيبك عسل, ما يلحسersh كله.

“If your friend is honey, do not lick all.”

4.18. Travel

Prior to the advent of motorised transport and paved roads, long-awaited relatives and visitors arrived either by boat or walked along the river bank from one village to another. Only nomadic Arabs and other non-Nubians travelled through the desert. Especially when visiting someone on the other side of the river, the two main options were the sailing boat (*kub*) and swimming. Many boats were built without nails or with wooden nails only. A former village headman exclaimed: We, Nubians, were living on a boat.¹²⁵³ The astonishing ability to swim skilfully prompted a European traveller in Nubia about three hundred years ago exclaim:

One cannot find a single Barbarin [i.e. Nubian] who cannot swim like a poodle, and this is a necessity because they could not cross the river otherwise, as ... both banks of the Nile are inhabited.¹²⁵⁴

¹²⁵² From SCHÄFER 1917; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹²⁵³ A. Goo-Grauer 2018, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2018, p.c.

¹²⁵⁴ HERZOG 1957b: 125; quoting Theodor Krump’s travel account.

Nowadays, all farmers south of Dongola town live on the mainland, travelling by boat to their fertile farmland on the uninhabited islands on a regular basis, except when the water level is low, as during the period of *tuubar*.

The many poems and songs about boat captains (*orwaas/erwiis/rayis*) were spread through boat travel. The village farmers paid him by working on the irrigated land (*kole*) he was assigned. At harvest time he only had to collect the yield of his plot. Even today villagers do not pay each single trip, but recompense the captain every couple of months or at harvest time.¹²⁵⁵

Medium-distance travel, i.e., reaching neighbouring hamlets, was on foot, by donkey, or by sailing boat. Nubian songs talked about the dangers of the footpaths, among them stones and the thorns of the *sant* acacia tree.¹²⁵⁶

Long-distance travel within Nubia and to destinations outside of Nubia was rare and mainly by sailing boat:

The Nubians ... were famous for building boats and for their navigation techniques, especially during the crest of the flood, upriver from north to south, breaking through nearly six cataracts between Aswan and Khartoum. [Their] return journey [was] down river to the north as far as the Delta. The navigators had no maps to guide them through locations, islands, cataracts and easy and dangerous navigation sites. Therefore they depended on describing and naming each site by its most evident quality.¹²⁵⁷

For one Mattokki man's father, it took 37 days to travel from Wadi Halfa to Cairo. He worked alongside a captain from Umbarakaab where many Mattokki captains came from.¹²⁵⁸ Cargo consisted of "loads of dates and grain, with sheep and goats, salted fish, straw mats, produce to be traded in Aswan or Halfa for cloth, tea, tobacco, pots and pans and gold."¹²⁵⁹

¹²⁵⁵ Kamal Hussein 2020+2023, p.c.

¹²⁵⁶ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2016, p.c.

¹²⁵⁷ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 21.

¹²⁵⁸ Sha'bān Berber 2018, p.c.

¹²⁵⁹ FERNEA 1970: 120.



Figure 7: Sailing boat (*kub*) crossing the Nile from Aartigaasha Island to Burgeg

Each village has at least one path along a water channel (*maltin darib*) leading from the village to the boat's mooring place (Ar. loanwords *mishra/mushra/muurada*) at the river Nile. It belongs to the whole village and is marked by a wooden peg (*kojir*), nowadays an iron one.¹²⁶⁰ It is hammered into the ground to tether the boat and is left in position when the boat leaves. The choice of path and mooring place depends on minimizing the use of the fertile soil needed for both.

Before the advent of steam boats, river transport was unreliable as it depended on wind. During the Nile flood before the winter the wind blows southward enabling travel from north to south against the flow of the river. By contrast, in summer the direction of wind is unpredictable, frequently making

¹²⁶⁰ HOMEYER 2020: 66; describes, based on conversations with Mattokki, the *mushra* as “sacred, time-honored spots in communal life.” Similar, Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

southward river transport by sailing boat nearly impossible.¹²⁶¹ Hence, boats did not run according to a fixed schedule. One had to wait patiently at the mooring place until weather conditions were suitable and a boat came along.



Figure 8: Mooring place (*mishra*) of rowing boat on Merowaarti Island

Departure to the cities was an important occasion, as it was unknown if and when the traveller would return home. The footprints of those leaving were dried and preserved. It was believed that this would assist the person's return.¹²⁶² Since the *hijra* when travelling to the cities Egyptian Nubians leave their home villages by train and bus. It is still a big event.

¹²⁶¹ Thourya Muḥammad 2017, p.c. There are special terms for these winds: *salaa* and *nowwi/nawi*. (Aḥmad 'Ali 2022, p.c. and Muḥammad Sharīf 2023, p.c.)

¹²⁶² Muḥammad Ḥasan 2009, p.c.

A18.1 ¹²⁶³ *ΕΡΩΪC ΟΩΩΙ ΚΟΥΒΚΙ ΚΙΔΔΙΓΙΡΙΝ.*

erwiis owwi kubki kiddigirin.

erwiis owwi kub=gi kiddi-gir-in

boat.captain two boat=ACC drown-CAUS-3SG

Two captains cause the boat to sink.

⇒ Many leaders create a problem.

⇒ Give responsibility to only one person to avoid conflict and disaster.

⇒ As the leadership was disputed on a particular issue, problems arose.

SCA: .رَيْسَيْنِ غَرَقُوا الْمَرْكَبَ. – “Two captains made the ship sink.”

ECA: .الْمَرْكَبُ الْإِلِي فِيهَا رَيْسَيْنِ تَغْرُقُ.

“The boat which has two captains will sink.”

English: Too many cooks spoil the broth.

The next proverb speaks about the opposite case:

A18.2 ¹²⁶⁴ *ΚΟΥΒ ΕΡΩΪCΚΙ ΚΟΜΕΝΙΛ ΚΙΔΔΙΝ.*

kub erwiiski koomenil kiddin.

kub erwiis=gi koor-men-il kiddi-n

boat captain=ACC have-NEG-PTC:IPF drown-3SG

The boat without a captain drowns.

⇒ The situation requires leadership and experience.

¹²⁶³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 115; and 2016: proverb 113); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod and Hishām Bashīr; also in TAHA 2011 and www.iqraweb.net/حكم-وأمثال-نوبية/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision. A10.4 has a similar meaning. Due to the numeral the subject does not carry a plural suffix. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 115. Cf. SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 556.

¹²⁶⁴ TAHA 2011; with revised orthography.

A18.3 ¹²⁶⁵ *ΚΟΥΒΚΙ ΚΩΛ ΚΟΔΙΡΓΙ ΜΙΣΙΡΜΟΥΝ.*

kubki kool kojirki misirmun.

kub=gi kool kojir=gi misir-mun

boat=ACC having peg=ACC overlook-NEG

The one who has a boat does not overlook the peg [for mooring].

⇒ The one who has the basic necessities of life will not ignore other less important things.

A18.4 ¹²⁶⁶ *ΚΟΥΒΚΙ ΙΡΙΨΙΛ ΚΟΥΒΝ ΚΟΔΙΡΟΥΝ.*

kubki irinyil kubn kojirun.

kub=gi iriny-il kub=n kojir-un

boat=ACC wait-PTC:IPF boat=GEN peg-COP

The one who waits for the boat is the peg of the boat.

⇒ If you want to achieve something, you need to be patient.

A18.5 ¹²⁶⁷ *ΚΟΥΒΚΙ ΔΟΛΙΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΚΟΔΙΡ ΤΕΓΙΝ.*

kubki dolil, tenn kojir teegin.

kub=gi dol-il tenn kojir teeg-in

boat=ACC love-PTC:IPF 3SG:POSS peg stay-3SG

The one who wants [to travel by] boat, his peg stays [behind].

⇒ Stay here, otherwise you will miss an opportunity.

⇒ Be on time! Otherwise the boat will leave without you.

¹²⁶⁵ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 116; and 2016: proverb 114); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. The proverb has the same meaning as A23.3.

¹²⁶⁶ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 175); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹²⁶⁷ From MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF, Shebatood; co-investigated with al-Amīn Muḥammad, also in ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 3, where *teegin* is replaced by *ani*.

A18.6 ¹²⁶⁸ *ΚΟΥΒΝ ΚΟΔΙΡ ἄΓΙΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΚΟΔΙΡ ΤἈΝΝἈΝ.*

kubn kojir aagil, tenn kojir tannan.

kub=*n* *kojir aag-il* *tenn* *kojir tannan*

boat=GEN peg stay-PTC:IPF 3SG:POSS peg COP

The peg of the boat that stays [behind], it is his peg.

⇒ Where you are is your home.

⇒ This is a habit.

A18.7 ¹²⁶⁹ *ΜΟΥΚΚΙ ΒΟΪΛ ΚΟΥΒ ΚΟΔΙΡ ἈΝΙΝ.*

mukki buul kub kojir anin.

mukki *buu-il* *kub kojir an-in*

cross.river STAT-PTC:IPF boat peg INCH-3SG

The one who is crossing the river, the boat becomes the peg.

⇒ When crossing the river Nile you have to stay on the boat.

⇒ If you set yourself a goal you have to stick by it.

A18.8 ¹²⁷⁰ *ἈΝΝ ΝἈΒ ΝΟΥΨ, ΚΟΥΒΛΙΡ ΔἌ ΒΟΥΨΟΥ.*

ann nab nuuh, kublir daa buuru.

ann *nab* *nuuh* ...

1SG:POSS prophet *Nūh*

kub-li=r *daa* *buu-r-u*

boat-PL=LOC be.present STAT-NEUT-1PL

My prophet *Nūh*, we are present in the boats.

⇒ We are on a boat and we are afraid of drowning. Keep us safe.

⇒ Protect us from everything.

¹²⁶⁸ From al-Amīn Muḥammad, Lebeb; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

¹²⁶⁹ From Aḥmad Sāti, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Sha'bān Muḥammad Aḥmad, Shawqī 'Abd al-'Azīz.

¹²⁷⁰ From Akram Ḥasan, Wad Nimeiri.

The proverb is said to have been uttered first by the prophet Jonah/*Yūnus* when he was travelling on a boat, remembering the prophet Noah/*Nūh* who had lived before Jonah/*Yūnus*. Noah/*Nūh* travelled in an ark during a great flood and stayed safe.

A18.9 ¹²⁷¹ *ΚΟΥΒΛΙΓΟΝ ΔΑΦΕΙ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΚΙΔΔΙΡΑΝ.*

kubligon jangi buun goon, kiddiran.

kub-li=gon jangi buu-n goon kiddi-r-an

boat-PL=CO fill PROG-3SG SUB drown-NEUT-3PL

While the boats are filling, they drown.

⇒ When having trouble, remember that others have even greater troubles.

A18.10 ¹²⁷² *ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΚΑΨΨΙΝ ΚΟΥΒ ΑΝΜΕΝ!*

tokkon kashshin kub anmen!

tokkon kashshi=n kub an-men

IMP:NEG dried.stalk=GEN boat INCH-IMP:NEG

Just do not become a boat of dried stalks!

kashshin kub Children like to build a boat out of dried stalk and play with it. However, it does not withstand any strong wind.

⇒ Don't behave stupidly!

A18.11 ¹²⁷³ *ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΤΟΛΛΕ ΜΟΥΚΚΙΜΕΝ!*

tokkon tolle mukkimen!

tokkon toller mukki-men

IMP:NEG draw cross.river-IMP:NEG

Just do not draw [the boat] and cross the river!

⇒ Don't argue so much!

¹²⁷¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 193); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹²⁷² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 163); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹²⁷³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

- ⇒ Although the meaning is clear, you try to discover what is behind the lines/words.
- ⇒ Accept words at face value and do not start interpreting them.

A18.12 ¹²⁷⁴ ΔαΦΦαΓΕΔ Δᾶ ΒῶΥΝ.

daffaged daa buun.

daffa=ged daa buu-n
oar=INS be.present STAT-3SG

He is present by the oar.

daffa (Ar. loanword) is situated at the rear of the boat where also the boatman sits. By contrast, passengers enter the boat at the front.

- ⇒ Without understanding the topic, he joins in the conversation.

A18.13 ¹²⁷⁵ ΔωᾶΜ ΜΟΥΨΡΑΡ ΤΟΥΒΒΙΜΟΥΝ.

awaam mushrar tubbimun.

awaam mushra=r tubbi-mun
swimmer mooring=LOC rest-NEG

The swimmer does not rest at the mooring. [Instead, when no boat is ready to sail he will swim.]

awaam (Ar. loanword) means ‘swimmer’ or ‘float’. Depending on its meaning the proverb’s interpretations differ.

- ⇒ He is self-sufficient and does not need other people.
- ⇒ Don’t put something where people need it and blame others for using it.

¹²⁷⁴ From Aḥmad Hamza’s wife. The proverb has the same meaning as A19.15.

¹²⁷⁵ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. The second interpretation is taken from www.igraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبیة [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision.

A18.14 ¹²⁷⁶ *INN ā̄r, INN MOYŵpa*

inn aar, inn mushra

inn aar inn mushra

2PL:POSS bank 2PL:POSS mooring

your (PL) bank, your (PL) mooring

⇒ The owner is respected.

A18.15 ¹²⁷⁷ *ΔΟΛΤΙΝ ΔΑΩΩΙ ΔΟΛΛΙΝ, ΝΟΓΙΛ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΔΟ̄ΥΡΜΟΥΝ.*

doltiṅ dawwi dollin, nogil malle duurmun.

dolti=n dawwi dollin ...

love=GEN way deep-COP

nog-il malle duur-mun

walk-PTC:IPF all reach-NEG

The way of love is difficult, not all who walk [on it] reach [its end].

dolti This is the only appearance of *dolti* in any Nubian proverb.

⇒ Be careful of your steps in every action you take (as in love) because you might not reach your goal and be disappointed.

The proverb is usually said by the elderly (male or female) as a warning.

A18.16 ¹²⁷⁸ *ΔΑΡΙΒΚΕΔ ΔΑΛΓΙ, ΚΙΝΙΣΣΕ ΩΕΓΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

daribked daalgi, kinisse shegmunu.

¹²⁷⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 102); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, Kamal Hussein. In ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 171) *mushra* is explained as of Arab origin as it occurs in SCA which is heavily influenced by Nubian, and listed as a separate proverb consisting of one word only. I will not go into more detail.

¹²⁷⁷ From AMNA MUṢṬAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza who replaces *dawwi* by the Arabic loanword *darub*. *dawwi* can also be replaced by *gowwi* with the literal translation ‘The well of love is deep, not all who walk [on it] reach [its depth].’

¹²⁷⁸ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 52); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan and Hishām Bashīr. The last one *daribged* as *darub sereeged* ‘the

darib=ged *daa-il=gi* *kinisse sheg-munu*
 [path=INS be.present-PTC:IPF]=ACC thorn pierce-NEG
 The thorn does not pierce [him] who is on the path.

⇒ Behave in a good way.

⇒ The one who behaves correctly is not suspected (not pricked by the others' thorns).

A18.17 ¹²⁷⁹ ΔΟΥΡΑΝ, ΑΓΑΡΚΙ ΕΛΚΟΜΟΥΝ.

juuran, agarki elkomun.

juur-r-an agar=gi el-ko-mun
 go-NEUT-3PL place=ACC find-PRT1-NEG

They are going away, he did not find the place.

⇒ Cherish your own family and home. When leaving family and home, one does not find a new one.

A18.18 ¹²⁸⁰ ΤΟΡΑΝ, ΚΟΥΛΓΙ ΕΛΚΟΜΟΥΝ.

tooran, kulgi elkomun.

toor-r-an kul=gi el-ko-mun
 enter-NEUT-3PL hole=ACC find-PRT1-NEG

They enter, he did not find the hole [for hiding].

⇒ He is in great trouble and cannot find a way out.

A18.19 ¹²⁸¹ ΩΑΡΡΙΓΕΔ ΔΑΝ ΓΟΝ, ΕΒΕΛΙΓΙ ΤΑΓΙΡΙΝ.

warriged daan goon, ecceligi tagirin.

good path' with *darub* a variant of *darib*. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 67, is the same.

¹²⁷⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 179); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza.

¹²⁸⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 180); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza.

¹²⁸¹ From Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mājid, Binna; co-investigated with ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Kamal Hussein.

warri=ged *daa-n* *goon* ...
 far=INS be.present-3SG SUB
eccel-i=gi tag-ir-in
 other-PL=ACC cover-PL:OBJ-3SG

Although being far away, he covers the others.

⇒ Wherever he is, he is caring for his relatives.

To most Nubians forgetting one's home village and family would be shameful; one would be without roots.¹²⁸² The saying is particularly apt these days as many Nubians working in the Arab Gulf regularly send financial aid to their families back home.

A18.20 ¹²⁸³ *ON TENNE MINΔO ωΔĪΓI IPIΓI ŌΥΡΡΙΚΙΡΙΛΓI ETTAKON?*

on tenne mindo shaaygi irigi uurrikirilgi ettakon?

on tenne mindo shaaygi iri=gi ...
 once.again Q:LOC [one.Shaygi people=ACC
uurri-kir-il=gi etta-ko-n
 tread-CAUS-PTC:IPF]=ACC bring-PRT1-2SG

Once again, where did you bring the Shaygi who oppressed the people?

⇒ I would not have expected him to return as initially he refused to allow others to become involved or mediate. Now he has changed his mind.

In the Dongola Reach the Shaygiya were disliked due to an oral story that in the past they used to fight the inhabitants of the Dongola Reach. More recently, the Shaygiya are said to laugh at Andaandi speakers when the latter aim to speak Arabic as Arabic is not their native language and the Dongolawi pronounce it differently.

¹²⁸² ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan 2022, p.c. Cf. BOURDIEU 1966: 210.

¹²⁸³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 200); co-investigated with Samira El-Melik-Ziadah, Hishām Bashīr, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

The proverb is mainly used when someone who has been advised against something, yet did not heed the advice, returns to the one who gave the advice. The adviser says the proverb.

M18.1 ¹²⁸⁴ *ΚΟΥΒ ΡΑΪΙC ΟΩΩΙΚΟ̄Λ, ᾶ ΚΙΔΔΟCΙ.*

kub rayis owwikool, aa kiddosi.

kub rayis *owwi-kool aag kiddi-os-i*

boat captain two-ADJR PROG sink-PFV-3SG

The boat having two captains is in the process of sinking.

⇒ Many leaders create a problem.

In this proverb the lexeme *aag* (PROG) and the perfective suffix *-os* (PFV) go together. *aag* usually occurs with the neutral tense (NEUT). The proverb talks about an action still in process, yet close to completion.

M18.2 ¹²⁸⁵ *ΚΟΥΒ ΕCΣΙΡ ΑΨΙΡΙΝ ΓΕΔΔΙΓΙ, ΜΟΥΡΔᾶΡ ΓΙΛΑΓ ᾶ ΓᾶΡΙ.*

kub essir ashirin geddigi, murdaar gilag aa gaari.

kub essi=ro ashir-in gedi=gi ...

boat water=LOC flow-3SG always=ACC

murdaa=ro gila=gi aag gaar-i

mooring=LOC sail=ACC PROG fold-3SG

The boat always flows in the water, [only] at the mooring it folds the sail.

murdaa (Ar. loanword: *mōrada*) is Nubianised in different ways, also as *mōrada*, *mūrada*.¹²⁸⁶

⇒ One always returns to one's origins.

⇒ I will take you wherever you want me to.

¹²⁸⁴ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga. Also the grammatical structure was discussed with Khayria Mūsa.

¹²⁸⁵ From Umm ʿUmar Ḥasan, Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹²⁸⁶ MASSENBAACH 1933: 198.

M18.3 ¹²⁸⁷ *ENNA GIRIP TŌN ā BELMĒKI, EKKI KINICCE ā
 ΨΕΓΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

enna girir toon aa belmeeki, ekki kinisse aa shegirmunu.

enna gir=ir toon aag bel-mee-ki ...
 2SG:POSS way=LOC from PROG exit-NEG-COND
ekki kinisse aag sheg-ir-munu
 2SG:ACC thorn PROG pierce-PL:OBJ-NEG

If you do not come out from your way, the thorns do not pierce you.

kinisse is in the singular. As in Nubia thorns occur in great numbers with some speakers PL:OBJ *-ir* is suffixed to the verb.

⇒ Don't interfere with the problems of others!

⇒ If you lead a straight life, you will not be hurt by others.

⇒ Don't lose your focus!

variant *tenna girki uruulgi kinisse aa shegmunu walla kulu aa jommuu.*
 Watching his way, the thorn does not pierce nor the stone hit [him].

M18.4 ¹²⁸⁸ *TENNAN OWWELGI OYRŌYĀGI, KOYLOY ā ΔΟΜΜΟΥΝΟΥ
 ΩΑΛΛΑ ΚΙΝΙΣΣΕ ā ΨΕΓΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

tennan owwelgi uruulgi, kulu aa jommuu walla kinisse aa shegmunu.

tennan owwelgi uruu-il-gi ...
 3SG:POSS in.front.of watch-PTC:IPF=ACC
kulu aag jom-munu walla kinisse aag sheg-munu
 stone PROG beat-NEG CONJ thorn PROG pierce-NEG

The one who watches what is in front of him, the stone does not strike [hurt him], the thorn does not pierce [him].

¹²⁸⁷ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Ḥisayn Shellālī. Aḥmad ‘Ali and Ḥisayn Shellālī, both from the Shellaal region, use the TAM marker *bi* replacing *aa*. Variant from KHAYRIA MŪSA.

¹²⁸⁸ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

⇒ Think about what is ahead of you.

M18.5 ¹²⁸⁹ ΤΕΝΝΑΝ ΟΩΩΕΛΓΙ ΟΥΡΩΥΛΓΙ, ΚΟΥΛΟΥ Δ̄ ΔΟΜΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

tennan owwelgi uruulgi, kulu aa jommunu.

tennan owwelgi uruu-il=gi ...

[3SG:POSS in.front.of watch.out-PTC:IPF]=ACC

kulu aag jom-munu

stone PROG beat-NEG

The stone does not strike [him] who watches out in front of him.

⇒ Think about what is ahead of you.

M18.6 ¹²⁹⁰ ΤΑΛΛΕΛ ΙΔ̄ ΝΑΛΙ.

tallel yaa nali.

talle-il aag nal-i

walk-PTC:IPF PROG see-3SG

The one who walks [goes away] sees [more].

⇒ Said when two friends part for a long time.

Its meaning is similar to M30.1, both said when departing.

M18.7 ¹²⁹¹ ΤΑΛΛΟCΕ Δ̄Δ̄ΝΔΕ, Β̄Ο̄ΔΟCΕ ΓΕΝΜΑ.

tallosee daande, boodosee genma.

talle-os-ee daa-nde bood-os-ee gen-ma

walk-PFV-NR be.present-COND run-PFV-NR better-COP

If an [opportunity for] leaving has [turned up], running is better.

-nde is not related to *=ndi* ('for you'/'for him'; APPL:3SG).

⇒ If leaving, leave now.

¹²⁸⁹ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

¹²⁹⁰ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹²⁹¹ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab; variant from Khālid Karār. He replaces the NR suffix *-ee* by *-ar*, the COND suffix *-nde* by *-ki* with *-ar* and *-ki* being more common.

- variant *tallosar daaki, boodosar genma.*
 If there is leaving, running is better.
- SCA: اللى وراءه المشى, أخير له الجرى.
 “If behind to him the walking, in front of him the running.”

4.19. Body Parts

In Nubian languages body parts play multiple roles. Lexically they denote the body parts themselves, grammatically they serve as adpositions¹²⁹², culturally they provide metaphors for proverbs, sometimes as a synecdoche (pars pro toto) for the whole human being.

In the following, body parts are sorted from head (*ur*) to foot (*ossi*). The face (*kony/koy*) is also a geographical term: When travelling from south to north the first part of an island one sees is named *kony/koy*.¹²⁹³ As the most expressive part of the face, the eye (*missi*) is the window of the soul. More than any other part of the body, it betrays the inner feelings and intents.

An envious person can have the ‘evil eye’ (Andaandi: *missi katti* or *missi milli*; Mattokki: *missi katti* or *missi garri*). It was not talked about explicitly. Proverbs from different semantic domains deal with the ‘evil eye’. While proverbs M3.1, M19.11, and M19.12 describe a person having the ‘evil eye’, proverb M11.1 depicts the outcome of putting the ‘evil eye’ on a person or an animal. The ‘evil eye’ results from envy which is said to be frequent among Nubian peasants. In many places a painted hand can be seen to protect against it. Also, it was proclaimed:

ΙΛΛΑΖΙΓΟΝ ΜΟΖΔΜΕΔΤΟΝ ἄΡΕΔ ἄΓΡΟΥ.

Illahigon Mohamedton aared aagru.

We take hold of God and Mohamed.¹²⁹⁴

¹²⁹² *jer* means ‘back’; *jerked* ‘behind’; *tuu* ‘stomach’ and ‘inside’.

¹²⁹³ Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c.

¹²⁹⁴ Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2016, p.c.; ‘Adīla Sulaymān 2016, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.

One Andaandi remembers his father recollecting the following incident: A cow had a large udder. A man became envious and cast the ‘evil eye’ on this cow. After that, the cow gave blood instead of milk.

The *Qur’ān* offers protection against the ‘evil eye’ by reciting Surah 113 in Arabic. Amulets bound on the upper arm or neck with an Islamic text inside in a leather cover, written by a Sufi mystic, a *fegiir*, offer help. *fegiirs* lived in Nubian villages, usually led the prayers, were able to read and write in Arabic, taught the *Qur’ān* and performed all duties typical for an *imām*.¹²⁹⁵

“The tongue [(*ned*)] is viewed in Sudanese proverbs as an organ that strongly affects human relationships.”¹²⁹⁶ A strong neck (*eyye*) symbolises someone who is able to labour hard.

In everyday speech the heart (*aa*) is a metaphor for hope, a place for love, dislike, worry, and sadness.¹²⁹⁷ The stomach (*tuu*) is regarded as the seat of one’s secrets. The back (*jer*) defines the character of a person.

Recently, Arab influence has introduced new meanings to metaphors and thus changes the meaning of metaphors. Some speakers assign to *jer* the meaning ‘influence, connections’ in the sense of the Arabic *wasta*.¹²⁹⁸

Proverbs mentioning obscene language are rarely remembered.¹²⁹⁹

¹²⁹⁵ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. *fegiir* (Ar. loanword) means ‘poor’ or ‘Sufi mystic’, as many Sufi mystics lived a simple life style.

¹²⁹⁶ SALWA AHMED 2005: 164.

¹²⁹⁷ Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c.; Muḥammad Şubḥi, p.c.

Cf.: Andaandi *aa kogor* ‘strong heart’ meaning ‘confidence’; *ann aagi aarkomun*. ‘He does not take my heart.’, meaning ‘I am not satisfied.’; *tenn aa milligir ed aagin*. ‘His heart was caused to be bad.’, meaning ‘He is not happy.’

Cf.: Mattokki *imburu ann aar daabuu*. ‘This girl is continually in my heart.’; *ann aar toon belossu*. ‘They came out from the heart.’ *ann aa ayy aa kali*. ‘My heart eats me.’; *ann aan dogoor dullambuu*. ‘It is heavier than my heart.’

¹²⁹⁸ Some Mattokki Nubians claim that the concept of *wasta* entered Nubia only after the *hijra*.

¹²⁹⁹ That is different from BARTLOTTI’s (2000: 158) Pashtun proverbs where obscene language may express wisdom. However, a former local collection of Pashtun proverbs did not include obscene language (BARTLOTTI 2000: 3-155). – When I asked

As every body part has to perform its function in order for the whole body to survive, likewise every Nubian is encouraged to do the work allotted to him in order for the community to continue and flourish. Also, as every body part is inseparable from the other one, Nubians feel that even though one's relation with another relative, sibling, etc. may be strained or even burdened with shame, all of them must stand together in times of need and great distress.

A19.1 ¹³⁰⁰ *BĀNTIN TŌYR KOYKI TAGIRMOYN.*

baantin tuur konyki tagirmun.

baanti=n tuur kony=gi tagir-mun
 dance=GEN inside face=ACC cover-NEG

Inside the dance [circle] one does not cover the face.

⇒ Without shame, you can do whatever you want to do.

variant *baantir tool tenn urki tagirmun.*

The one who enters the dance does not cover the head.

A19.2 ¹³⁰¹ *WIRIḌ DAĀL, KOYKI TAGIRMOYNOY.*

wirij daal, konyki tagirmunu.

wirij daa-il kony=gi tagir-munu
 naked be.present-PTC:IPF face=ACC cover-NEG

The one who is naked, does not cover the face.

⇒ Without shame, you can do whatever you want to do.

⇒ The one who does not feel ashamed when he commits small bad deeds, will not feel ashamed when he commits big bad deeds.

an Andaandi speaker and good friend specifically about proverbs with *kuffi* 'penis' he replied that neither he nor his friends had ever heard such a proverb.

¹³⁰⁰ From AMNA MUṢṬAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein; variant from ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 217). Similar variant in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision.

¹³⁰¹ From AMNA MUṢṬAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

A19.3 ¹³⁰² ΔΙΛΤΙ ΚΕΡΕΥΚΩΛ.

dilti kereykoöl.

dilti *kerey-kool*

hair crooked-ADJR

[He is] Having crooked hair.

⇒ He is unlucky.

⇒ He is to be blamed.

This saying does not refer to African hair which, unlike European straight (*kiyatti*) hair, is considered *kerey*. It does not mean that someone with *kerey* hair is unlucky. Only the word *kerey* is part of the metaphor.

A19.4 ¹³⁰³ ΟΥΡΚΕΔ ΒΟΥΝ ΓΩΝ, ΟΥΧΟΥΔΚΕΔ ΙΜΒΕΛΙΝ.

urked buun goon, usudked imbelin.

ur=ged *buu-n goon usud=ged *imbel-in**

head=INS lie-3SG SUB anus=INS stand.up-3SG

Although he rests with the head, he stands up with the anus.

ur ... usud One stands up with the head first, the bottom comes later.

⇒ He works without order.

⇒ He wants to achieve something without being qualified.

A19.5 ¹³⁰⁴ ΟΥΡΝ ΝΑΛΕΓΙ ΚΩΛ.

urn nalegi kool.

ur=n *nal-e=gi kool*

head=INS see-NR=ACC having

¹³⁰² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 126; and 2016: proverb 203); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, Kamal Hussein. The proverb has the same meaning as A2.6. The German idiom ‘Er kann niemand ein Haar krümmen’ while using a similar metaphor has a different meaning.

¹³⁰³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, Kamal Hussein.

¹³⁰⁴ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 156); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

[He is] Having a vision of the head.

⇒ He has a premonition.

The body part term *ur* is also otherwise metaphorically used to describe characteristics as in *tenn ur belbuun*. ‘His head goes out.’, meaning ‘He does not think well.’; and in *tenn ur jangi buun*. ‘His head has the filling.’, meaning ‘He has knowledge.’

A19.6 ¹³⁰⁵ *MICCIKŌλ.*

missikool.

missi-kool

eye-ADJR

[He is] Having an eye.

missi can mean one eye, yet also a pair of eyes.

⇒ Based on his experience he knows what will happen in the future.

⇒ He understands a person’s character simply by observing him.

A19.7 ¹³⁰⁶ *MICCIḠI KŌMENIN, MICCIḠI āωTIPKOPAN.*

missigi koomenin, missigi aawtirkoran.

missi=gi koor-men-in missi=gi aaw-tir-kor-an

eye=ACC have-NEG-3SG eye=ACC make-2/3REC-PRT1-3PL

He does not have an eye, they make [someone else] the eye.

⇒ He is unable to fulfil his position.

⇒ When asking for advice, ask the right person.

¹³⁰⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 158); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹³⁰⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 190); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. While in the English literal translation both clauses are juxtaposed, in Andaandi the first clause is subordinate, signified by the NEG suffix *-men* that only occurs in subordinate, interrogative or imperative clauses, and therefore the second clause the main clause.

A19.8 ¹³⁰⁷ ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΜΙΣΣΙΓΙ ΚΩΜΟΥΝ.

kulu missigi koomun.

kulu missi=gi koor-mun

stone eye=ACC have-NEG

The stone does not have an eye.

kulu A stone cannot be held accountable. The responsibility lies with the one who has an eye, i.e. the human being.

⇒ You are responsible. Hence, get out of the way!

A19.9 ¹³⁰⁸ Βᾶλ Νάλμοϋνοϋ, Μίττι Μέν Νάλιν.

baal nalmunu, missi men nalin.

baal nal-munu missi men nal-in

mind see-NEG eye DISC see-3SG

The mind does not see, on the contrary, the eye sees.

⇒ Meeting in person is preferable.

A19.10 ¹³⁰⁹ ΕΝΝ ΜΙΣΣΟΝ ΔΟΥΚΚΟΕΛ.

enn misson dukkosel.

enn missi-on dukki-os-el

2SG:POSS eye-OPT pull.out-PFV-PTC:PF

I wish your eye had been pulled out.

⇒ You have done something bad. I hope God does not see it.

The proverb is said by a mother to her child.

¹³⁰⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

¹³⁰⁸ From AMNA MUṢṬAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹³⁰⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 134); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein. The PFV suffix *-os* can be omitted.

A19.11 ¹³¹⁰ *IN TENN MICCIḠI TENN CAḠBEḠEḠ ḠḠAKKIN.*

in tenn missigi tenn sarbeḠed shakkin.

in tenn missi=gi tenn sarbe=Ḡed shakki-n
 DEM 3SG:POSSEye=ACC 3SG:POSSfinger=INS rub-3SG

He rubs his eye with his finger.

- ⇒ He plunges into his own misfortune.
- ⇒ He is a foreigner who detests other foreigners.
- ⇒ He is arrogant and pretends to have achieved something even though he has not.
- ⇒ He shows off.
- ⇒ He could continue living comfortably in Europe yet returns to the Sudan.

A19.12 ¹³¹¹ *ḠOḠKA ḠOḠḠOḠPIN MĀḠPO OP ḠANIN.*

goshka dungurin maarro or anin.

goshka dungur-i=n maar=ro or an-in
 one.eyed blind-PL=GEN village=LOC king INCH-3SG

The one-eyed becomes the king in the village of the blind.

- ⇒ Something is better than nothing.
- ⇒ He is less than other people yet wants to be their leader.
- ⇒ Even a semi-educated person can be valuable.¹³¹²
- ⇒ He claims to know it all.

¹³¹⁰ From ‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadīq, Dembo; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹³¹¹ From ḤAMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 32); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; variants from TAHA 2011, with revised orthography, Mu‘amr al-Fīl, Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, and Aḥmad Hamza. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ confirms the second last variant. First variant with different word order also in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision. *goshka* in Khannaag village becomes *goshko* in villages north of Dongola. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 14, is the same.

¹³¹² TAHA 2011; with revised orthography. Also the next interpretation.

- variant *goshko dungurin beledir ghaali.*
The one-eyed, in the land of the blind, is of great value.
- variant *goshko dungurin daarro gaali.*
The one-eyed, in the land of the blind, is of great value.
- variant *dungurin maarro goshko ghaali.*
In the village of the blind the one-eyed is of great value.
- variant *dungurin baladir goshko gaali.*
In the land of the blind the one-eyed is of great value.
- MSA.¹³¹³ .الأعور (بين/في بلد/في بلاد) العميان ملك.
“The one-eyed is king among the blind / in the land of the blind.”

A19.13 ¹³¹⁴ ΔΟΥΕΕΟΥΡ ΔΟΜΙΡΑΝ ΒΑΔ, ΨΑΩΙΝ.

dungur jomiran baad, nyawin.

dungur jom-iran baad nyaw-in

blind beat-INF after step.back-3SG

The blind [person] after beating [him], steps back.

- ⇒ You should have done it before. There is no benefit in doing something afterwards.

A19.14 ¹³¹⁵ ΕΝΝ ΤΑΤΤΙ ΟΝ ΒΟΥΡΓΙΡ ΒΑCCEΛ.

enn tatti on burgir bassel.

enn tatti on burg=ir bassi-el

2SG:POSS pupil OPT grave=LOC burst-PTC:PF

I wish your pupil bursts in the grave.

¹³¹³ While there are similar SCA proverbs (SALWA AHMED 2005: proverbs 352-354; ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 115) the MSA one is closer and therefore listed.

¹³¹⁴ From ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 5; co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

¹³¹⁵ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 132); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

tatti usually is a shift at the waterwheel. Here it signifies a part of the eye.

⇒ Prayer for somebody who is very ill and may soon die.

A19.15 ¹³¹⁶ ΟΥΛΟΥΓΚΕΔ Δᾶ ΒῪΥΝ.

ulugked daa buun.

ulug=ged daa buu-n

ear=INS be.present STAT-3SG

He is present by ear.

⇒ Hearing a conversation without understanding, he intervenes.

A19.16 ¹³¹⁷ ΝΕΔΤΙ ΚῪΛ ΝᾶΝΕΝ ΚᾶΝΙCCE ΒῪΥΡῪΜΟΥΝ.

nedti kool naanen kanisse buureemun.

ned=gi kool naane=n kanisse buuree-mun

tongue=ACC having POSS=GEN dough bare.LV-NEG

The dough of the one having a tongue does not remain unused.

naanen emphasises possession. It is used in the northern Dongola Reach.

buur is the “land that is left uncultivated”.¹³¹⁸

⇒ The eloquent orator achieves results. He will win customers and sell out quickly.

⇒ People trust someone who talks persuasively.

English: Selling coals to Newcastle.¹³¹⁹

¹³¹⁶ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 214); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. The proverb has the same meaning as A18.12. Cf. M15.5.

¹³¹⁷ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 80; and 2016: proverb 79); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein; variants from the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd and Mu’amr al-Fīl with *haajmaarro* being optional.

¹³¹⁸ TAHA A. TAHA 2012: 10. SCA has loaned the term *buur* (TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 33).

¹³¹⁹ In the past Newcastle was situated in a mining area.

variant *nedti kooln merse haajmaarro buureemun.*

The beer of the one having a tongue does not remain unused in *Haajmaar*.

haajmaar is an imaginative village name where people pray a lot and are friendly to each other. The name consists of two Arabic loan-words, *haaj* (or Ar. *ḥaajj*) ‘pilgrim’ and *maar* ‘village’.

⇒ A good salesman sells beer even in a village with pious people.

A19.17 ¹³²⁰ *TOKKON ENN NEΔTI OYNΔΟΥPMEN!*

tokkon enn nedti undurmen!

tokkon enn ned=gi urdur-men

IMP:NEG 2SG:POSS tongue=ACC insert-IMP:NEG

Just do not insert your tongue!

⇒ Don’t interfere by talking!

A19.18 ¹³²¹ *NEΔON ΔΑΩΩΟΥΡ ΔNKIN, TER ΔΟΛΙΝΓΙ ΒΑΨΨΙΝ.*

nedon jawwur ankin, ter dolingi banynyin.

ned=on jawwur an-ki-n ...

tongue-CO:COND moist INCH-COND-3SG

ter dol-in=gi banynyi=n

[3SG want-3SG]=ACC speak-3SG

If the tongue is moist, it speaks what it wants.

⇒ If you are feeling well you can speak openly and do what you want.

A19.19 ¹³²² *TŌMα MEN ΦΑΓΓΑΓΙ, ΖĒ, MαN IN NEΛΓΙ EKON.*

tooma men fangagi, hee, man in nelgi ekon.

¹³²⁰ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

¹³²¹ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Fu’ād ‘Akūd, Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muṣṭafa Samiltod.

¹³²² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 188); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Muḥammad ‘Awaḍ.

tooma men fanga=gi hee ...
 with.few.teeth DISC without.teeth=ACC INT
man in nel=gi e-ko-n
 DEM DEM tooth=ACC be-PRT1-3SG

Look indeed, someone with a few teeth [laughed] about someone with no teeth.

⇒ Instead of complaining about others, he should be critical of himself.

A19.20 ¹³²³ *NEΛ KO66IP ΔPŌN.*

nel koccir aroon.

nel kocci=r aroo-n
 tooth top=LOC white-COP

The tooth is white on the top.

⇒ While he is saying one thing, he is thinking the opposite inside.

A19.21 ¹³²⁴ *ΕΛ ἄΓ ὈΥΚΚΙΝ.*

el aag uukkin.

el aag uukki-n
 tooth PROG bark-3SG

The tooth barks.

⇒ The tooth is aching.

A19.22 ¹³²⁵ *ΔĪ ΔΓΙΛΓΙ ΚΟΥΥΕΔ ἄΓΙΡΙ.*

ay agilgi kused aagiri.

ay agil=gi kus-ed aag-r-i
 1SG mouth=ACC open-PFV PROG-NEUT-1SG

¹³²³ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 49); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹³²⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; *el* and *nel* are synonyms.

¹³²⁵ From Muḥammad Ḥasan, Tura‘; co-investigated with Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood, ‘Ammār Ya‘qūb. Hāmīd Khabīr gives the last meaning.

I have opened the mouth [and the outcome is still visible].

agilgi kus is also the name of the first morning snack, taken immediately after getting up.¹³²⁶

- ⇒ I have come to ask for a girl to marry.
- ⇒ I am engaged. (said by male person only)
- ⇒ I do not fast, I have eaten food.
- ⇒ I do not know what to do.

A19.23 ¹³²⁷ ΓΟΥΜΟΥΡΚΩΛ.

gumurkool.

gumur-kool

neck-ADJR

[He is] Having a neck.

- ⇒ In spite of being healthy he doesn't make any effort to work and earn his living.
- ⇒ Nickname of a lazy person.

A19.24 ¹³²⁸ ΕΝΝ ἄΓΙ ΒᾶΛΚΟ, ΔᾶΒΙΡ! ἈΔΕΜΙΓΙ ΤΙΝΝ ἄΝ ΓῆΡ
ΔᾶΒΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

enn aagi baalko, jaabir! ademigi tinn aan geer dabirmunu.

enn aa=gi baalko-∅ jaabir-∅ ...

2SG:POSS self=ACC pay.attention-IMP:SG take.care-IMP:SG

adem-i=gi tinn aa=n geer dabir-munu

human-PL=ACC 3PL:POSS self=GEN except lose-NEG

Pay attention to yourself, take care! Nobody destroys the human beings except themselves.

¹³²⁶ Cf. SCHÄFER 1935: 298; also introduction to semantic domain 7.

¹³²⁷ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 7); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Fu'ād 'Akūd.

¹³²⁸ From AMNA MUŞTAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, 'Awaḍ Ḥasan.

- ⇒ Take care of yourself. Nobody looks after oneself better than the person himself.
- ⇒ No need for other people to serve me. I care for myself.

A19.25 ¹³²⁹ *ΑΔΕΜΓΙ ΤΕΝΝ ἄΝ Γαῖᾶρ ΔΑΒΙΡΜΟΥΝ.*

ademgi tenn aan gayar dabirmun.

adem=gi tenn aa=n gayar dabir-mun

human=ACC 3SG:POSS self=GEN without lose-NEG

He does not destroy the human without himself [the heart].

- ⇒ Nothing changes faster than a human being.
- ⇒ Nothing destroys a human more than oneself.

A19.26 ¹³³⁰ *Ἴ ωἔρ ΤΕΝΝ ΔΕΡΚΙ ἘΩΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

ii weer tenn jerki eewmunu.

ii weer tenn jer=gi eew-munu

hand one 3SG:POSS back=ACC wash-NEG

One hand does not wash its back.

- ⇒ It is impossible to work alone. People need to combine their efforts.

SCA: يد على يد تجدع بعيد. – “Hand-in-hand goes a long way.”

A19.27 ¹³³¹ *Ἴ ωἔρ ΟΛΛΙ ΔΟΜΜΟΥΝ.*

ii weer olli jommun.

¹³²⁹ From Ḥasan Tambal, Dibela; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. It is regarded as wisdom (Ar. *ḥikma*). It is a shortened version of A19.24.

¹³³⁰ ‘ABD AL-‘AAL AHMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod and Said ‘Abd al-Raḥman. Both replace *eewmunu* by *shuukkimunu*. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 177, is the same.

¹³³¹ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography; co-investigated with Ibrāhīm Muḥammad.

ii weer olli jom-munu
 hand one clapping beat-NEG
 One hand does not clap.

⇒ It is impossible to work alone. People need to combine their efforts.

A19.28 ¹³³² *ĪN MAĪYFKŌL.*

iin mayinykool.

ii=n mayiny-kool
 hand=GEN left-ADJR

Having the left of the hand. – One who is left handed.

⇒ He constantly has bad luck.

⇒ He works without order.

A19.29 ¹³³³ *ENN ĪN BŌY MAĪĪN ANIN.*

enn iin buu mayiin anin.

enn iin buu mayiin an-in
 2SG:POSSright TAM left.handed INCH-3SG

Your right [hand] will become left-handed.

⇒ Something becomes worthless.

A19.30 ¹³³⁴ *Ī EP İCKI İWİCMENİNĞİ, ΔŌĞ.*

ii er iski iwismeningi, doog!

ii er iski iwis-men-in=gi doog-Ø
 [hand 2SG be.able twist-NEG-2SG]=ACC kiss-IMP:SG

Kiss the hand that you are not able to twist!

¹³³² From HĀMID KHABİR (2007 and 2016: proverb 11); co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹³³³ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹³³⁴ From HĀMID KHABİR (2007: proverb 73; and 2016: proverb 72); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 105. SAVAGE 2008: 7, finds the proverb among the Tuareg.

iski is a variant of *eski*.

⇒ As a weak person you should not fight a strong man. It will not be in your favour.

English: If you cannot beat them, join them.

A19.31 ¹³³⁵ *Ī CŌYΔ ΓᾶφκαΤΤΙΜΟΥΝ.*

ii suud gaanykattimun.

ii *suud gaany-katti-mun*

hand empty lick-PASS-NEG

The empty hand is not licked at all.

ii When eating with fingers at the end the remains are licked off. If someone does not get any food there is nothing to be licked.

⇒ If someone has nothing he cannot give anything to those in need.

⇒ It needs someone who can give.

Cologne idiom: Von nix kütt nix.

A similar non-proverbial expression is *ii suudked widekon*. ‘He returned empty-handed.’

A19.32 ¹³³⁶ *TENN Ī CŌWŌΔΟΥΝ.*

tenn ii sowwodun.

tenn ii sowwi-ed-un

3SG:POSShand get.dry-PFV-COP

His hand has dried up.

sowwi also means ‘to be ashamed’. According to the co-investigators aspects of honour-shame are not included here.

⇒ He is greedy/stingy.

¹³³⁵ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹³³⁶ From Sayida ‘Abd al-Khāliq, Khannaag; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Both utter *-od* as a variant of *-ed*. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 26. That means that *-od* can be a variant of *-ed* and *-os*.

A19.33 ¹³³⁷ *ΤΙΡΓΟΝ ΟΛΛΙΝ ΔΟΜΤΙΓΙ ΔΟΛΛΑΝ, ΑΙΓΟΝ ΟΥΝΨΟΥΡΜΟΥΝ.*

tirgon ollin jomtigi dollan, aygon unyurmun.

tir=gon olli-n jom-ti=gi dol-r-an ...

3PL=CO clapping-GEN beat-NR=ACC love-NEUT-3PL

ay=gon unyur-mun

1SG=CO know-NEG

They love the sound of the clapping [applause], and [but] I do not know [want it].

olli has three meanings, ‘shade’ (Andaandi only), ‘clapping’, and ‘unit of measurement made by cupping both hands together.’¹³³⁸

The second and third meaning both refer to both hands.

⇒ I do not want to be part of it, even if others love it.

⇒ I do not want to deal with politics.

A19.34 ¹³³⁹ *Ī ECCIP ΔĀ BŌYĀ, ĪGIP ΔĀ BŌYĀKIPĪMOYŪN.*

ii essir daa buul, iigir daa buulkiriimun.

ii essi=r daa buu-il ...

hand water=LOC be.present STAT-PTC:IPF

iig=ir daa buu-il=kirii-mun

[fire=LOC be.present STAT-PTC:IPF]=SIM-COP:NEG

The hand that is in water is not similar to [the hand] that is in fire.

⇒ An outsider cannot judge a situation as well as an insider.

⇒ He watches football on TV and thinks he knows how to play football better than the football team.

¹³³⁷ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 191); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. Hāmid Khabīr received the proverb from Muḥammad ‘Ali (Old Dongola).

¹³³⁸ Last meaning from MASSENBAACH 1933: 203.

¹³³⁹ From Zibeir al-Malik, Argo; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

A19.35 ¹³⁴⁰ Ἰ ΒΑΨΥΪΔΤΙ ΤΑΓΙΡΜΟΥΝ, ΔἘΩ ΟΡΟΦΕΛ ΚΑΛΓΙ Ο̅ΣΜΟΥΝ.

ii banynyiidti tagirmun, deew oroofel kalgi oosmun.

ii banynyi-iid=gi tagir-mun ...

hand speak-NR=ACC cover-NEG

deew oroofel kal=gi oos-mun

baking.plate cold food=ACC produce-NEG

The hand does not cover the speech, the cold baking plate does not produce the food.

⇒ Everything needs preparation.

⇒ Before marrying one needs to have achieved certain things.

A19.36 ¹³⁴¹ ΚΟΥΝΤΙ ΚΟΥΚΟΥΡ ΤῸΝ ΒΕΛΜΟΥΝ.

sunti kusur toon belmun.

sunti kusu=r toon bel-mun

finger nail flesh=LOC from exit-NEG

The fingernail does not come out from the flesh.

⇒ A child remains one's child even if it behaves badly.

⇒ Relatives remain relatives even if there is anger.

SCA and ECA: الظفر ما يطلع من اللحم.

“The fingernail does come out from the flesh.”

SCA and ECA express the opposite, according to Arabic culture.

¹³⁴⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 139); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan. As a variant Hāmid Khabīr replaces *ii* by *ay* with the first subordinate clause translated as ‘I do not cover the talking’.

¹³⁴¹ From lady relative of El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Khannaag, written down by El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. The proverb seems to be relatively unknown. Co-investigated with family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd, Abdel Halim Sabbar (Halfawi). In Zaghawa it is “Even if you gave birth to a snake, you should tie it on your waist.” (SULEIMAN OSMAN 2006: proverb 22)

A19.37 ¹³⁴² ΔΕΡΚΙ ΚΩΛ, ΤΩΥΡ ΔΟΜΚΑΤΤΙΜΟΥΝ.

jerki kool, tuur jomkattimun.

jer=gi kool tuu=r jom-katti-mun
back=ACC having stomach=LOC beat-PASS-NEG

Having a back, he is not punched in the stomach.

⇒ He has influence and the ability to mediate.

SCA: .الما عندو ضهر بينضرب على بطنو.

“Who does not have a back gets flogged on his belly.”

A19.38 ¹³⁴³ ΤΩΥΡ ΔΑ ΒΩΥΛ, ΝΕΔΕΜΓΙ ΚΟΜΟΥΝ.

tuur daa buul, nedemgi koomun.

tuur daa buu-il nedem=gi koor-mun
inside be.present STAT-PTC:IPF regret=ACC have-NEG

That which is inside, it does not have regret.

⇒ Keep secrets confidential. Otherwise you will regret later.

⇒ Eat the food straight away.

The main meal among Nubians, as well as among Sudanese, is breakfast. If a child wants to leave just before breakfast, his mother tells him that breakfast is ready and advises him to eat first. If the child disagrees the mother says the proverb.

A19.39 ¹³⁴⁴ ΟCΣΙ ΨΟΡΟ ΤΙΡΤΙΓΙ ΑΡΖΕΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

ossi shooro tirtigi arheemunuu.

ossi shooro tirti=gi arhee-munu

leg weak owner=ACC have.mercy.LV-NEG

¹³⁴² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 129.

¹³⁴³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹³⁴⁴ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 111; and 2016: proverb 109); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

A weak leg is not merciful to the owner [to the human it belongs to].

⇒ Don't be curious and go to all sorts of places! Your leg will end up hurting.

English: Curiosity killed the cat.

A19.40 ¹³⁴⁵ *ḍaḡaḍn ossigi korkottir tigiṙan.*

jagadn ossigi korkottir tigiṙan.

jagad=n ossi=gi korkotti=r tig-r-an
weak=GEN leg=ACC dried.silt=LOC trace-NEUT-3PL

They trace the leg of the weak [person] in the dried silt.

ossi symbolises the footprints left behind when walking on dried silt. It remains for a long time. By contrast, when walking along the receding river or on the irrigated field, footprints vanish quickly.

⇒ He treats rich people differently from poor people.

⇒ He does not benefit from his work while others who are lazy take the benefit.

A19.41 ¹³⁴⁶ *ENN ƐOYṬa KOTTIKIRƐI, ENN OCCIGI NEKKE!*

enn guta kottikirgi, enn ossigi nekke!

enn guta kotti-kir=gi ...

2SG:POSS cover as.tall.as-CAUS=ACC

enn ossi=gi nekke-Ø

2SG:POSS leg=ACC stretch-IMP:SG

As tall as your [winter] cover, stretch out your leg!

guta (Ar. loanword) is the Nubian covering while asleep. It covers head and body against the cold in winter and protects against mosquitos.

¹³⁴⁵ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 36); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Muḥammad Ḥasan.

¹³⁴⁶ From Muḥammad Šālīḥ, Seleem 3; co-investigated with Hāmid Khabīr. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 351.

- ⇒ Be satisfied with what you have!
- ⇒ You should only talk about what you do and have. Don't boast!
- ⇒ Just buy what your money is sufficient for!
- ⇒ Although he is poor, he behaves like a wealthy person.
- ⇒ You are paying too much. Just pay what is necessary.
- ⇒ Don't marry a wife who is richer than you!

SCA: مد رجلِك على قدر لحافِك.

“Stretch your legs in proportion to the length of your quilt.”

A19.42 ¹³⁴⁷ ΤΕΚΚΙ ΩΕΓΙΝ, ΓΕ̄ΩΓΙ ΕΤΤΑΜΟΥΝ.

tekki shegin, geewgi ettamun.

ter=gi sheg-in geew=gi ettar-mun

3SG=ACC pierce-3SG blood=ACC bring-NEG

[Although] He pierces him, he does not bring the blood [no blood come out].

- ⇒ Any well-intended advice has no influence on his behaviour.
- ⇒ He is stupid and does not have common sense.

geew is otherwise metaphorically used to describe characteristics as in *tenn geew jugri* ‘His blood is hot.’, meaning ‘He does not have patience.’ ‘He becomes angry quickly.’; and in *geew naddi kool* ‘blood with bitterness’, meaning ‘without nice talking’.

A19.43 ¹³⁴⁸ ΑΜΜΑ ΒΕΛΕΔ ΕΚΚΙ, ΤΕΝΝ ᾹΓΙ ΔΕ̄ΓΟΚΟΝ.

amma beled ekki, tenn aagi deegoskon.

amma beled ekki ...

but land urinate

tenn aa=gi deeg-os-ko-n

3SG:POSS self=ACC irrigate-PFV-PRT1-3SG

¹³⁴⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹³⁴⁸ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 152); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

But the land [its inhabitants] urinates, it has [completely covered] irrigated itself.

- ekki* urinating results in a bad smell, which nobody likes.
 ⇒ The inhabitants destroy their own land, i.e. by corruption.
 ⇒ The country is as bad as if it had all been watered with urine.
 ⇒ Society has changed for the worse.

A19.44 ¹³⁴⁹ *INḠOY, EKKEḌON TIRḠI KECMENKIN, EKKIMOYNAN.*

ingu, ekkedon tirgi kesmenkin, ekkimunan.

in-gu ekked=on tir=gi kes-men-ki-n ...
 DEM-PL urine=CO:CONDowner=ACC pester-NEG-COND-3SG
ekki-munan
 urinate-NEG.3PL

They, if the urine does not pester its owner, do not urinate.

- ekked* In the context of a village setting with no medical facilities urinating on a wound is first aid at no cost and considered to disinfect the wound.

- ekkedon* begins a subordinate clause. That explains the position of the CO:COND suffix *=on* that usually follows the first word of a clause.

- tir* is a shortened form of *tirti* (owner).

- ⇒ He is greedy.
 ⇒ He does not render any help to other members of the community who are in need, not even something he has in abundance.

¹³⁴⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 147); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein. In Nubian script Ḥāmid Khabīr does not write the final *-munan*. However, *-mun* is part of the Arab transcription. Due to the plural of *ingu -an* is added by Kamal Hussein. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverbs 11 and 176. The last interpretation is taken from there.

A19.45 ¹³⁵⁰ *ΚΟΥΚΑΪ ΒΟΛΑ ΜΟΝΜΟΥΝ.*

kuukay boola moonmun.

kuukay *boola* *moon-mun*
man.without.genitals woman.without.uterus reject-NEG

A man without genitals [eunuch] does not reject a woman without uterus.

⇒ Someone with really negative qualities does not care about the negative features of someone else.

M19.1 ¹³⁵¹ *ΑΡΔΙΡ ΒΟΥΛΓΙ ΟΥΡΝΑ ΔΟΓΟΡ Α ΟΥΣΚΟΥΡΙ.*

ardir buulgi urna dogoor aa uskuri.

arid=ir *buu-il=gi* *ur=na* *dogoor* ...
[earth=LOC lie-PTC:IPF]=ACC head=GEN above
aag uskuri
PROG put-3SG

He puts that which lies on the earth [floor] above his head.

⇒ He takes care of other people's problems.

⇒ The foolish person turns a simple problem into a big one.

English: He makes a mountain out of a molehill.

M19.2 ¹³⁵² *ΟΥΡΝΑ ΚΟΒΕΙ Α ΒΙΝΕΝ ΓΟΝ, ΔΟΥΡΓΙ ΓΖΙΒΕΣΟΥ.*

urna kocci aa bineen goon, juurgi ghibeesu.

ur=na *kocci aag binee-n* *goon* ...
head=GEN top DUR appear-3SG SUB
juur=gi ghibe-s-u
go=ACC be.absent-PRT2-3SG

¹³⁵⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 82; and 2016: proverb 81). No ACC clitic follows *boola*. The lexeme *kuukay* and *boola* are relatively unknown.

¹³⁵¹ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi.

¹³⁵² From Yahya 'Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm, Fathī 'Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki. Outside of the Shelaal area *juurgi* becomes *juugi*.

Until [only] the top of the head appeared [was visible], he went and became absent.

⇒ He was away for a long time.

The proverb describes the process of walking from the river bank into the river, when at some point an onlooker on the river bank only sees the top of the head. It is an exclamation of surprise about meeting someone who left the village and was absent for a long time.

M19.3 ¹³⁵³ *ΟΥΡ ΟΥΡΡΙ ΒΟΥΝ ΓΟΝ, ΕΩΓΕΔ ἄ ΦΑΤΤΙ.*

ur urri buun goon, eewged aa fatti.

ur urri buu-n goon eew=ged aag fatti-Ø
 head tread PROG-3SG SUB tail=INS PROG waggle-3SG

While he treads the head [of the second person], [the second person] waggles the tail.

⇒ He is pretending to be more.

There are two reasons for *ur* being without ACC clitic: 1) While *ur* is the object of the first sentence, it is also the subject of the second sentence. 2) *ur* describes a person that is not specified. The same sentence with *urki* would designate a specific person.

M19.4 ¹³⁵⁴ *ΟΥΡ ΨΕΒΚ ἄ ΜΟΔΙ.*

ur shebk aa moji.

ur sheb=gi aag moj-i
 head white.hair=ACC PROG braid-3SG

She braids the white hair of the head.

moj Young Nubian women and girls enjoy braiding their hair, but not the elderly women with white hair.

¹³⁵³ From Muṣṭafa Rabī', Heesa Island; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid who also discussed the proverb's grammatical aspects. Of course, that would need further analysis. Here, the GEN clitic =*n* after *ur* is omitted.

¹³⁵⁴ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Asmaa A. Kenawy, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Abd al-Qādir.

⇒ She is very old, yet still takes care of her appearance.

⇒ She tries to pretend something she is not.

English: Mutton dressed as lamb.

M19.5 ¹³⁵⁵ *TENNA KOÏΓI OYMBΟΥΔN ECCIΓEΔ ĒΩEΔ ĀΓI.*

tenna koygi umbudn essiged eewed aagi.

tenna koy=gi umbud=na essi=ged ...

3SG:POSS face=ACC salt=GEN water=INS

eew-ed aag-i

wash-PFV PROG-3SG

He has washed his face with salt water.

⇒ He revealed his thoughts without restraint.

⇒ He did not feel ashamed.

M19.6 ¹³⁵⁶ *KOÏI OΩΩIKŌΛ.*

koyi owwikool.

koy-i owwi-kool

face-PL two-ADJR

[He is] Having two faces.

⇒ He is very bad.

⇒ He goes along with both sides.

English: to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

M19.7 ¹³⁵⁷ *MICCI ZĀSIB ΔOΓŌP Ā KOYΣMOYNOY.*

missi haajib dogoor aa kujmunu.

¹³⁵⁵ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli.

¹³⁵⁶ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Abd al-Qādir.

¹³⁵⁷ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with 'Ali Aḥmad / A. Goo-Grauer, Mekki Muḥammad.

missi haajib[=na] dogoor aag kuj-munu
 eye eyebrow[=GEN]above PROG be.up-NEG
 The eye is not above the eyebrow.

- ⇒ He deserves more respect than he asks for.
 ⇒ He deserves less respect than he gets.
 ⇒ He is haughty.

When an elderly man enters a room a young man shows respect by standing up. If the old man deems it unnecessary, the young man may quote the proverb, meaning ‘You deserve more respect than you ask for’.

M19.8 ¹³⁵⁸ *ZŌΛIFI TENNA MICCI Ā INΔIMNOY.*

zooligi tenna missi aa injimnu.
zooli=gi tenna missi aag inji-munu
 people=ACC 3SG:POSseye PROG carry-NEG
 His eye does not carry the people.

St. transl.: The world does not fill his eye.

- ⇒ He respects no one.

M19.9 ¹³⁵⁹ *MICCI NALKŌMNOY, OYΛOYΓ ΓΙΔΙΡΚŌMNOY.*

missi nalkoomnu, ulug gijirkoomnu.
missi nal-koo-munu ulug gijir-koo-munu
 eye see-PRT1-NEG ear listen-PRT1-NEG
 The eye did not see, the ear did not hear.

St. transl.: He hides a secret. The secret is in the well.

- ⇒ He keeps a secret because it can be dangerous to tell anyone else.

The proverb is considered a fitting way to describe Arab culture.

¹³⁵⁸ From St41; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

¹³⁵⁹ From St8; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi.

M19.10 ¹³⁶⁰ *MICCI İĀMA Ā NALI, Ā ḠABBAWĒPK Ā ΔOLI.*

missi yaama aa nali, aa habbaweerk aa doli.

missi yaama aag nal-i ...

eye often PROG see-3SG

aa habba=weer=gi aag dol-i

heart individual=INDF=ACC PROG love-3SG

The eye sees many, the heart loves one person [only].

⇒ There is only one person I love.

M19.11 ¹³⁶¹ *TENNA MICCI KOYLOY Ā TŌGI.*

tenna missi kulu aa toogi.

tenna missi kulu=∅ aag toog-i

3SG:POS eye stone=ACC PROG break-3SG

His eye breaks a stone.

⇒ He has the ‘evil eye’, thereby causing harm.

variant *missi kulug aa baagi.*

The eye divides the stone.

M19.12 ¹³⁶² *Ā WĒPA: TENNA MICCI BOKKIREΔILGI,
OWWITTIGEΔ: MĀN MICCIN ΔWĀPKEN, WĒTIPCOY.*

aa weera: tenna missi bokkiredilgi,

owwittiged: man missin awarken, weetirsu.

aag wee-r-a tenna missi ...

PROG say-NEUTR-3PL 3SG:POS eye

bokki-ir-ed-il=gi owwittiged ...

hide-TR-PFV-PTC:IPF=ACC again

¹³⁶⁰ From Khālīd Karār, Seyaale. This is a line from a love song of the late Mattokki artist Ḥasan Guzuuli which has become proverbial among Mattokki.

¹³⁶¹ From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’³s sister, Dakke.

¹³⁶² From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’³s sister, Dakke; from Arabic; co-investigated with Faḥī ‘Abd al-Sayid; variant from KHAYRIA MŪSA.

man missi=na awar=ged wee-tir-s-u
 DEM eye=GEN single=INS say-2/3REC-PRT2-1PL

They say: His eye has been hidden.
 Again, we said to them: He is with a single eye.

⇒ Don't blame me, you are no better.

The proverb is said when two parties are arguing. I.e.: There are two slaves. The first one insults the second because he is a slave. The second responds with the proverb. – Alternatively, the proverb refers to the 'evil eye'.

M19.13 ¹³⁶³ *TENN OYΛOYΓKI KOYΛOY ā ΔOMMOYNOY.*

tenn ulugki kulu aa jommuu.
tenna ulug=gi kulu aag jom-munu
 3SG:POSSear=ACC stone PROG beat-NEG

His ear, the stone does not strike.

⇒ He is a good person who does not listen to gossip, instead distinguishes between right and wrong.

M19.14 ¹³⁶⁴ *ΩĒPĒ TENNA NEΔ ΔOΓŌP TĒBI.*

weeree tenna ned dogoor teebi.
wee-ee tenna ned[=na] dogoor teeb-i
 say-NR 3SG:POSStongue[=GEN] above be-3SG

The talk is above his tongue.

⇒ He is always ready with an answer.

M19.15 ¹³⁶⁵ *NIΛ ZABBERKŌΛ NIΛ OΩWIKŌΛ ΔOΓŌP OYCYŌYCOY.*

nil habberkool nil owwikool dogoor usuusu.

¹³⁶³ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ.

¹³⁶⁴ From St39; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

¹³⁶⁵ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. *nil* is a variant of *nel*.

nil habba weer-kool nil owwi-kool dogoor ...
 tooth piece one-ADJR tooth two-ADJR above
usuu-s-u
 laugh-PRT2-3SG

The one having one tooth laughed about the one having two teeth.

⇒ He is unimportant, but laughs about someone a little more important.

M19.16 ¹³⁶⁶ *INΔI MENILLΟΥ, ΔΓΙΛΓΙ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡΜΙΝΟΥ!*

indi menillu, agilgi undurminu!

indi menillu agil=gi undur-min-u

2PL:POSS except mouth=ACC insert-NEG-IMP:POL:PL

Except what belongs to you, do not put into the [your] mouth!

⇒ You interfere while others are talking.

English: You are always putting your oar in.

When two people are talking to each other and a third one arrives and interferes the proverb may be said.

M19.17 ¹³⁶⁷ *ἄ ΓΟΦΙΛ ΚΟΥΣ ΒΟΪ, ἄ ΒΑΤΤΕΛΓΟΝ ΨΟΥΓΟΥΡ ΒΟΪ.*

aa gonyil kuj buu, aa battelgon shugur buu.

aa gony-il kuj buu-Ø...

heart build-PTC:IPF be.up STAT-3SG

aa batti-el=gon shugur buu-Ø

heart pull.down-PTC:PF=CO get.down STAT-3SG

The heart that built is lifted up and the heart that destroyed is down.

¹³⁶⁶ From St14; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹³⁶⁷ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Thābit Zāki, Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid. *gonyil* could be extended to *gonyilgon* corresponding to *battelgon* and emphasising the contrast of both clauses. However, as proverbs prefer to be short and concise the first participle is *gonyil* only.

- ⇒ Don't plan any evil deeds!
- ⇒ The good you do will increase you: If you go to school your position in life will improve. If you visit a sick person in hospital you will become a better person.

M19.18 ¹³⁶⁸ *INN Ī GAMMĒKI, MİCCIP TŌN AFESHK Ā ŌCMOYNOY.*

inn ii gammeeeki, missir toon afeshk aa oosmunu.

inna ii gammee-ki ...

POL:2PL:POSS hand come.together.LV-COND

missi=ro toon afesh=gi aag oos-munu

eye=LOC from piece.of.straw=ACC PROG remove-NEG

When your hand comes together, [Without your own hand] you cannot remove the piece of straw from the eye.

- ⇒ If you are able to do it, don't rely on someone else.

M19.19 ¹³⁶⁹ *ASAŁ ADEL EN GŌN, MINNAĪ ĐEPKEĐ TĒBI?*

asal adel en goon, minnay jerked teebi?

asal adel e-n goon ...

tomorrow good be-3SG SUB

minnay jer=ged teeb-i

Q:CAUS back=INS stop-2SG

Although tomorrow will be good, why are you standing with the back [toward it]?

- ⇒ Why don't you face the future?
- ⇒ Why do you look backwards (as to a happy past) instead of moving forward?

English: Every cloud has a silver lining.

¹³⁶⁸ From Zīzī Şiyām, Tingaar; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid, Aḥmad 'Ali.

¹³⁶⁹ From women from Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ, Sha'bān Berber.

When someone is without hope or when sorrow follows joy the proverb may be said to encourage the depressed person to carry on and not give up.

M19.20 ¹³⁷⁰ *ENN Ī MĒNĪΛ ENNA ΔΕΡΚ ἄ ΚᾠΔΜΟΥΝΟΥ!*

enn ii meenil enna jerk aa koodmunu!

enna ii meenil ...

2SG:POSShand except

enna jer=gi aag kood-mun-u

2SG:POSSback=ACC PROG scratch-NEG-IMP:POL:SG

Except with your [own] hand do not scratch your back!

meenil and *menillu* are synonyms, depending on the speaker.

⇒ Take care of your own business.

⇒ Help yourself.

variant *enn ii ennaan jerk aa koodi.*

Your hand scratches the back belonging to you.

variant *enna jerki enn ii meenil yaa koodmunu.*

Your back, except with your [own] hand do not scratch it.

When a pupil asks his parents to do his homework, they may respond by saying the proverb.

The following rhetorical question has the opposite meaning:

variant *enn ii mine enna jerk aa koodi?*

How can your hand scratch your back?

⇒ The task is impossible. Therefore, accept help!

M19.21 ¹³⁷¹ *ENN Ī IKKE ἄΩCOY.*

enn ii ikke aawsu.

enna ii ikke aaw-s-u

2SG:POSShand ADV make-PRT2-2SG

¹³⁷⁰ From St19; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid; variants from Zizī Şiyām, Faḍl Aḥmad and ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹³⁷¹ Without source. Cf. M21.3.

Your hand made so.

⇒ Everyone is responsible for his own deeds and mistakes.

M19.22 ¹³⁷² Ἰ ΤΕΚΚΙ ΙΝΔΙΛΓΙ, ἄ ἀῶῶΙ.

ii tekki injilgi, aa acci.

ii *ter=gi inji-il=gi aag acci-Ø*
 hand [3SG=ACC carry-PTC:IPF]=ACC PROG bite-3SG

He bites the hand that carries [helps] him.

⇒ He receives a lot of help yet he harms his benefactor.

English: biting the hand that feeds you

M19.23 ¹³⁷³ ΙΝΝ ΙΡ Οἶ Δἄ ΒῶΥΝἈ?

inn iir oy daa buuna?

inna ii=ro oy daa ...
 POL:2PL:POSS hand=LOC dried.okra be.present

buu-na

STAT-Q:PRED

Is there dried okra in your hand?.

⇒ In your hands everything melts away.

M19.24 ¹³⁷⁴ ΤΕΡ ΒΕΡ ΒῶΥΝ ΓῶΝ, ΤΕΝΝ Ἰ ΕCЦИΓ ἄ ΝΑΚΚΙΜΝΟΥ.

ter beer buun goon, tenn ii essig aa nakkimnu.

ter beer buu-n goon ...
 3SG be.satisfied STAT-3SG SUB

tenna ii essi=gi aag nakki-munu
 3SG:POSShand water=ACC PROG drip-NEG

¹³⁷² From St55; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹³⁷³ From RabT’ Yūnis, Allaagi.

¹³⁷⁴ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER. Zīzī Ṣiyām replaces *nakki* by *boog* ‘to pour’. MASSENBACH 1933: 136, lists the same sentence without marking it as proverb. The proverb has the same meaning as M19.25.

Although he is satisfied, his hand does not drip water.

⇒ He is greedy/stingy.

⇒ He is rich yet does not share.

English: like trying to get blood from a stone

M19.25 ¹³⁷⁵ *ECCI TENNA COYBĀP TŌN Ā WOYGOYPMOYNOY.*

essi tenna subaar toon aa shugurmunu.

essi tenna subaa=ro toon aag shugur-munu
water 3SG:POSS finger=LOC from PROG descend-NEG

The water does not descend from [between] his finger.

St. transl.: He does not break the water apart from between his fingers.

⇒ He is greedy/stingy.

M19.26 ¹³⁷⁶ *ΜΑΓΑCINΑΩΡΕ ΕΝΝΑ COYBĀΓI Ā WOY!*

magasinawre enna subaagi aawu!

magas-i=nawre enna subaa=gi aaw-u
thief-PL=SIM 2SG:POSS finger=ACC make-IMP:POL:SG

Similar to thieves, make your finger [move]!

⇒ Do something without me noticing it!

M19.27 ¹³⁷⁷ *BĒP BŌYΛ COYBĀΓ Ā ΓĀĪMINOY.*

beer buul subaag aa gaayminu.

beer buu-il subaa=gi aag gaay-minu
be.satisfied STAT-PTC:IPF finger=ACC PROG lick-NEG

The one who is satisfied does not lick the finger.

⇒ Said by a wealthy person to a poor one when quarrelling.

¹³⁷⁵ From St65; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. The proverb has the same meaning as M19.24.

¹³⁷⁶ From St54; co-investigated with Muḥammad Mīrghani, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awād.

¹³⁷⁷ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awād; Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. In Dehemiit *gaay* is replaced by *juuk*.

⇒ A wealthy person may do things a poor one is not able to do, such as frequently put on new clothes and not use the old ones.

M19.28 ¹³⁷⁸ *COYTTI KO66IP TŌN ā BELMOYNOY.*

sutti koccir toon aa belmunu.

sutti *kocci=ro toon aag bel-munu*
 fingernail top=LOC from PROG exit-NEG

The fingernail does not come out from the top.

⇒ We belong together.

⇒ A child remains one's child even if it behaves badly.

⇒ Relatives remain relatives even if there is anger.

⇒ He remains my friend even if he has done evil.

variant *sutti kusus toon aa belminu.*

The fingernail does not come out from the flesh.

English: Blood is thicker than water.

M19.29 ¹³⁷⁹ *ΔΕΡΚΙ ΚŌΛ ΤŌΥΝ ΔΟΓŌΡ ā ΔΟΜΤΑΚΚΙΜΝΟΥ.*

jerki kool tuun dogoor aa jomtakkimnu.

jer=gi *kool ...*
 back=ACC having

tuu=na *dogoor aag jom-takki-munu*
 stomach=GEN above PROG beat-PASS-NEG

Having a back, he is not punched above the stomach.

⇒ He has influence and the ability to mediate.

¹³⁷⁸ From St18; co-investigated with Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki, Abdel Halim Sabbar.

¹³⁷⁹ From St16; co-investigated with Fathi 'Abd al-Sayid.

M19.30 ¹³⁸⁰ *ΤᾨΥΡ Δᾶ ΒᾨΥΛΓ ᾶ ΚΟΒΙΛ ΔᾶΜΝΟΥ.*

tuur daa buulg aa kobil daamnu.

tuur daa buu-il=gi ...

[inside be.present STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC

aag kob-il daa-munu

PROG lock-PTC:IPF be.present-NEG

That which is inside is locked and not present [visible].

tuur can be glossed in this and the following proverb as ‘in the stomach’ or ‘inside’.

⇒ Secrets are hidden, they cannot be elicited from me.

⇒ Others will not see what you eat but how you dress.

⇒ What I have is the best.

⇒ None can recognise your thoughts.

variant *enna tuur daa buulgi yaa nalil daamnu.*

It is not that which is inside which one sees.

M19.31 ¹³⁸¹ *ἘΝ ΜῘΩΝΑ ΤᾨΥΡ Δᾶ ΒᾨΥΛΓΙ, ᾶ ἼΡΙ*

een meewna tuur daa buulgi, aa iiri.

een meew=na tuur daa ...

[woman pregnant=GEN inside be.present

buu-il=gi aag iir-i

STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC PROG know-3SG

He knows what is present inside of the pregnant woman.

⇒ He knows everything.

M19.32 ¹³⁸² *ἘΡ ἈΝΝΑ ΔΟΥΓΟΥΣΙ ΜΟΥΚΟΤΤΙ ΤΕΡΡΑΝΓΙ ἱᾶ ἼΡ ΒᾨΥ.*

er anna dugusi mukotti terrangi yaa iir buu.

¹³⁸⁰ From Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; variants from Ramaḍān Muḥammad. Ashūr Radwan replaces *yaa nalil* ‘which one sees’ by *oyir buul* ‘which one knows’.

¹³⁸¹ From St50; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹³⁸² From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Khālid Kalos.

er anna dugus-i mukotti terran=gi ...
 2SG [1SG:POSS intestines-PLhow.many COP:3PL]=ACC
aag iir buu-Ø
 PROG know STAT-2SG

You know how many my intestines are.

⇒ You know everything about other people.

English: You know me inside out.

M19.33 ¹³⁸³ Γᾶδα ΔΟΥΛΛΟΚῸΛ.

gaada dullokool.

gaada dullo-kool

buttocks heavy-ADJR

[He is] Having heavy buttocks.

⇒ He stays without end.

⇒ He does not change his opinion easily.

The first interpretation was given to me in Mattokki: *teegin agarro toon aa imbelmin.* ('He stays without rising from the place.')

M19.34 ¹³⁸⁴ ΜΟΥΡCΙ ΟCΣΙΓΙ ΚῸΜΝΟΥ.

mursi ossigi koomnu.

mursi ossi=gi koor-munu

lie leg=ACC have-NEG

The lie does not have legs.

ossi is used as a collective noun, meaning both legs.

⇒ A lie will be revealed.

ECA: .الكذب مالوش رجلين – "The lie does not have legs."

¹³⁸³ From 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Raūf's sister, Dakke; co-investigated with 'Amm Sali's wife, Thābit Zāki. *kool* is not preceded by '-gi'.

¹³⁸⁴ From St11; co-investigated with Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz; variant from Sayid al-Ḥasan. The proverb has the same meaning as M22.25, A20.10 and A22.19, opposite meaning to A9.13.

English: The truth will come out.

M19.35 ¹³⁸⁵ *ABBICIN, KĀḠIN ΓΙΛΛĀBIP ENN OCCI TŌCOY.*

abbisin, kaacin gillaabir enn ossi toosu.

abbi-s-in ...

set.trap-PRT2-2SG

kaa-ci=na gillaab-ir enna ossi toor-s-u

house-PL=GEN trap=LOC 2SG:POSS leg enter-PRT2-2PL

You set a trap, your feet entered in the trap of the house.

⇒ You wanted to cheat, and you were cheated yourself.

⇒ When you plan for something evil to happen to someone else, God will let it happen to you.

ECA: من حفر حفرة لأخيه وقع فيها.

“Whoever digs a pit for his brother will fall into it.”

M19.36 ¹³⁸⁶ *OCCIGI INḠIN AΓAPPO, OYCKOYΡ TALLE!*

ossigi injin agarro, uskur talle!

ossi=gi inji-n agar=ro uskur talle-∅

leg=ACC carry-3SG place=LOC put walk-IMP:SG

Raise the foot at the place [you are], put [it down] and walk!

⇒ Go and work neatly step by step.

⇒ You must begin. The first step is the beginning of many steps.

M19.37 ¹³⁸⁷ *ENNA ΓATĀNN ΓEΔIP, ENN OCCIGI MIDΔEE!*

enna gataann gedir, enn ossigi middee!

¹³⁸⁵ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke. Thābit Zāki makes the second clause stronger, denoting a completed action: *toorosu*.

¹³⁸⁶ From Ḥajja ‘Atiāt Šābr, Debood; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹³⁸⁷ From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’s sister, Dakke; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber, ‘Amm Sali’s wife, Thābit Zāki; variant from Muḥarrām Maḥmūd. Muḥammad Jabāli replaces *gataan* by the Arabic loanword *liḥāf/lahaaf* ‘cover, blanket’ and *middee* by *fartee*.

enna gataan=na gedir enna ossi=gi ...
 2SG:POSS cover=GEN fitting 2SG:POSS leg=ACC
middee-Ø
 stretch.LV-IMP:SG

Fitting to the [winter] cover, stretch out your leg!

gataan (var. *ghataan*; Ar. loanword *quṭun* ‘cotton’) is the Nubian cover while asleep. It covers body and head especially in winter, also protects against mosquitos.

- ⇒ Be satisfied with what you have.
- ⇒ Just buy what your money is sufficient for.
- ⇒ Don’t marry a wife who is richer than you.
- ⇒ He is paying too much. He should just pay what is necessary.

variant *ossigi ghataan gedir waris!*
 Stretch out the leg, fitting to the blanket!

M19.38 ¹³⁸⁸ *ΟCCΙΓΕΔ ΔΟΥΡΓΙ, ΑΓΓΑΡΕΓΕΔ ΡΕΔΕΜΑ.*

ossiged juurgi, angareeged rejeema.

ossi=ged juur=gi ...

[leg=INS go.away]=ADV

angaree=ged rejee-ma

sleeping.bench=INS return.LV-COP

After he left on foot, [it is that] he returns by the sleeping bench.

- ⇒ He died.

The proverb is said about somebody who recently died.

¹³⁸⁸ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

M19.39 ¹³⁸⁹ ΤΕΝΝΑ ΓΕΩ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕΜΑ.

tenna geew urummema.

tenna geew urumme-ma

3SG:POSS blood black-COP

His blood is black.

⇒ He is not nice. People dislike him.

⇒ He is evil.

English: He is a bad egg.

M19.40 ¹³⁹⁰ ΓΑΙΨΥΡΙΡ ΚΙΝΝΑΡ ΓΕΩ ἄ ΨΟΥΓΟΥΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

ganynyir kinnar geew aa shugurmunu.

ganynyir kinna=r geew aag shugur-munu

razor small=LOC blood PROG get.off-NEG

In the small razor the blood does not get off.

⇒ A little effort is not enough to achieve the goal.

⇒ Work hard!

M19.41 ¹³⁹¹ ΓΕΩ ΔΙΛΛΟ ἰᾶ ΕCCI ΔΝΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

geew asillo yaa essi anmunu.

geew asillo aag essi an-munu

blood never PROG water become-NEG

Blood never becomes water.

yaa/aag is here followed by a noun instead of a verb, as shown in Aḥmad ‘Ali’s pronunciation of the final three words: *aagessaamunu*.

¹³⁸⁹ From St42; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. Muḥammad Ṣubḥi replaces *urummema* by *teebi*, the sentence meaning ‘His blood stops/stands still.’

¹³⁹⁰ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Thābit Zāki.

¹³⁹¹ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

⇒ Members of one family may be angry with each other; however, they never become enemies. In times of need they close ranks.

variant *geew umurro essi aakoomnu.*

Blood in its life time never becomes water.

MSA: .دم عمره ما يبقى مياه. – “The blood never becomes water.”

English: Blood is thicker than water.

M19.42 ¹³⁹² *oyii TIPTĪΓ ā CĪĪETIPMOYNOY.*

uyi tirtiig aa siiyetirmunu.

unyi *tirtii=gi* *aag* *siiye-tir-munu*

excrement owner=ACC PROG stink-2/3REC-NEG

The excrement does not stink to [its] owner.

⇒ He is blind to his own faults.

4.20. Conversation

Nubians enjoy meeting each other in their homes and talking (*banynyiid/baygid*; verbal noun *banynyi/bayn*) in group settings (*wanasa*), disseminating knowledge, information and ideas, especially in the evenings after the work is finished and a cool breeze blows from the river Nile:¹³⁹³ “Chatting is Nubian behaviour. You never chat with somebody you do not like. You need to chat in order to get to know somebody.”¹³⁹⁴ Other extended conversations happen during weddings, at other celebrations, or on feast days.

One old Dongolawi man assumes that until recently Nubians talked less as meeting daily needs was more demanding and time consuming. Still some Nubians prefer to limit time spent in conversation, as the one who does not talk cannot cheat.¹³⁹⁵ Indeed, talking can be harmful, as rendered by some

¹³⁹² From Thābit Zāki, Umbaraakab. Thābit Zāki acknowledges that other Nubians may use *sunne* ‘to smell’. *uyi* is a regional variant of *unyi*.

¹³⁹³ Shoukry Roweis (2022, p.c.) about the pre-*hijra* Nubian villages. Cf. 2.3.4.

¹³⁹⁴ Maher Habbob 2006, p.c.

¹³⁹⁵ al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl 2010, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2015, p.c.

proverbs in semantic domain 18 ‘Body Parts’ referring to the ‘tongue’ (*ed/ned*) and the ‘mouth’ (*agil*).

Of course, such statements may reflect the difference between the composition of interlocutors prior to the advent of mass communication and afterwards. In the former, a Nubian was limited to interlocutors from his own village, whereas modern communication makes such limitations obsolete.

A20.1 ¹³⁹⁶ *ΒΑΦΥΡΪΔΟΝ ΔΟΥΡΓΙΓΕΔ ΕΚΙΝ, ΚΙΤΤΕΡΑΡ ΝΟΒΡΕΝ.*

banynyiidon dungiged ekin, kitterar nobren.

banynyiid=on dungi=ged e-ki-n ...

talking=CO:COND silver=INS be-COND-3SG

kitterar nobre-n

silence gold-COP

If talking is [like] silver, silence is [like] gold.

banynyiid can be further glossed as *banynyi-iid* ‘speak-NR’. As this semantic domain is specifically about ‘conversation’, I leave it.

kitterar can be further glossed as *kitte-rar* ‘be.silent-NR’.

⇒ Your silence is better than your talking.

MSA: إذا كان الكلام من فضة، فالسكوت من ذهب.

“If talking were from silver, silence were from gold.”

English: Silence is golden.

A20.2 ¹³⁹⁷ *ΒΑΦΥΡΪΔ ΚΑΚΚΑΡΕΡ ΤΟΜΕΝΙΛ.*

banynyiid kaskaser toomenil.

banynyiid kaskase-r toor-men-il

talking basket=LOC enter-NEG-PTC:IPF

Talking that does not enter the basket.

¹³⁹⁶ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 19); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. In some villages where Andaandi is spoken *kitterar* is replaced by *kitteriid*.

¹³⁹⁷ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 21); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd.

- ⇒ Your statement is not clear/reasonable.
 ⇒ You talk about something that you do not comprehend yourself.
 English: You are talking through your hat.

A20.3 ¹³⁹⁸ *Βαφφῖῶδι Βαφφῖρανν Δογῶρ Τεκκι ἄρραν Δολλων.*
banynyiidi banynyirann, dogoor tekki aarran dullon.

banynyiid=gi banynyi-ran=n ...

[language=ACC speak-INF]=GEN

dogoor ter=gi aar-ran dullo-n

COMP 3SG=ACCunderstand-INF difficult-3SG

Speaking the language – understanding it is more difficult.

- ⇒ Those who talk a lot are not cleverer than those who listen.
 ⇒ They talk about what they do not comprehend themselves.

An English rhyme with similar content is: ‘A wise old owl sat in an oak, the more he saw, the less he spoke. The less he spoke, the more he heard. I wish I were more like that wise old bird.’

A20.4 ¹³⁹⁹ *IN ENN Βαφφῖῶδι Κουρουν Ουρρογον Διγῖρμουν.*
in enn banynyiid kurun urrogon digirmun.

in enn banynyiid ...

DEM 2SG:POStalking

kuru=n ur=ro=gon digir-mun

turtledove=GEN head=LOC=CO fall-NEG

This your talking does not fall even into the head of a turtledove.

- ⇒ Your speech is strange/unbelievable.

¹³⁹⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 24); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹³⁹⁹ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd.

A20.5 ¹⁴⁰⁰ *TENN ΒΑΦΥΪΔ ΓΟΪΡ ΔΙΓΙΡΜΟΥΝ.*

tenn banynyiid guur digirmun.

tenn banynyiid guu=r digir-mun

3SG:POSS talking ground=LOC fall-NEG

His talking does not fall on the ground.

⇒ His speech is trustworthy.

⇒ He keeps his promises.

A20.6 ¹⁴⁰¹ *ΩΙΘΘΙΡΝ ΙΡ ΔΑΒΙΝ, ΒΑΦΥΪΔΝ ΙΡ ΔΑΒΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

wicciirn iir dabin, banynyiidn iir dabmunu.

wicciir=n iir dab-in ...

stick=GEN mark disappear-3SG

banynyiid=n iir dab-munu

talking=GEN mark disappear-NEG

The mark of the stick disappears, the mark of talking does not disappear.

wicciir While a stick was used mainly for support, it was also employed for beating.

⇒ Don't curse or talk maliciously! It has negative consequences.

A20.7 ¹⁴⁰² *ΕΡ ΒΑΦΥΪΝ, ΜΑΛΛΕ ΒΟΪΔΓΕΔ ΒΕΛ ΒΟΪΝ.*

er banynyin, malle buudged bel buun.

er banynyi-n ...

2SG speak-2SG

malle buud=ged bel buu-n

all clear.space=INS come.out PROG-3SG

¹⁴⁰⁰ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. The proverb describes the opposite experience as A20.4.

¹⁴⁰¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 108; and 2016: proverb 106); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. Aḥmad Sāti replaces *wicciir* by *kuruj*.

¹⁴⁰² From AMNA MUṢṬAFA, Binna; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadīq.

You are talking, all comes out into the clear space.

⇒ You do not keep any secrets.

SCA: انت في الصندوق خبرك في السوق.

“You are in the box; your story is in the market.”

A20.8 ¹⁴⁰³ Βαφφῖδιτι Γολλιν.

banynyiiddi gollin.

banynyiid=gi golli-n

talking=ACC swallow-3SG

He swallows the talking.

⇒ He denies what he said before.

A20.9 ¹⁴⁰⁴ ΜΟΥΡCᾶλλον ENN OCCIGI OPᾠΦEΓIPKIN,

ENN ᾶΓI OPᾠΦEΓIPMOYH.

mursaalon enn ossigi oroofegirkin, enn aagi oroofegirmun.

mursaal=on enn ossi=gi ...

messenger=CO:COND 2SG:POSS leg=ACC

oroofe-gir-ki-n ...

be.cold-CAUS-COND-3SG

enn aa=gi oroofe-gir-mun

2SG:POSS heart=ACC be.cold-CAUS-NEG

If the messenger causes your leg to be cold, it does not cause your heart to be cold.

⇒ Sending a messenger saves the trouble of becoming active oneself, however, the messenger may not complete the task to one’s satisfaction.

¹⁴⁰³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

¹⁴⁰⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Muṣṭafa Samiltod replaces *mursaalon* by *er eewin*. ‘Abd al-Allah ‘Abd al-Rāziq omits the emphasis marker and the two possessive pronouns. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 111, where ‘messenger’ is replaced by ‘child’. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 285.

⇒ When you send someone else to do some errands, the price or the quality may not suit you. Instead, perform the task yourself.

While A10.7 describes the person who sends someone else, A20.9 describes its consequences. While the sender does not get tired, he worries that the messenger may not complete the task to his satisfaction. So the sender's heart stays warm because of worrying.

SCA: المرسل إن ریح رجلك ما یریح بلك. – “If the courier gives rest to your legs, he will not give rest to your mind.”

A20.10 ¹⁴⁰⁵ ΜΟΥΡΚΙ ΒΟΔΚΙΝ, ΔΕΔΔΙΓΙ ΔΟΥΡΜΟΥΝ.

mursi boodkin, jeddigi duurmun.

mursi bood-ki-n jeddi=gi duur-mun
lie run-COND-3SG truth=ACC reach-NEG

When the lie runs, it does not reach the truth.

jeddi is related to Arabic جد (meaning ‘seriousness’) that replaces the Nubian term *alee* of Greek origin, nowadays considered Nubian.

⇒ The lie does not equal the truth. The truth is more valuable.

⇒ However you lie, the truth will come out.

A20.11 ¹⁴⁰⁶ ΤΑΩΤΑΩΜΕΝΙΛ, ΚΑΨΚΑΨΜΕΝΙΛ,

ΚΑΨΨΙ ΟΩΩΙΓΕΔ ΩΔCΜΕΝΙΛ.

tawtaawmenil, kashkaashmenil, kashshi owwiged waasmenil.

tawtaaw-men-il kashkaash-men-il ...

speak.shyly-NEG-PTC:IPF be.nervous-NEG-PTC:IPF

¹⁴⁰⁵ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-‘Aal Şadīq, Bashīr ‘Abdallah. The proverb has the same meaning as A22.19, M19.34 and M22.25, opposite meaning to A9.13, an extended variant of A20.10 including metaphors.

¹⁴⁰⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 48); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. Also in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبیة/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where the last interpretation is taken from where orthography needs revision.

kashshi owwi=ged waas-men-il
 dried.stalk two=INS boil-NEG-PTC:IPF

The one who speaks without shyness, the one who is without nervousness, the one who does not boil with two sticks.

- ⇒ He comes across as confident.
 ⇒ He does not get angry quickly.
 ⇒ He is a role model: He is not talkative, nor weak, nor passive about trivial matters, rather he is firmly based on his principles.

A20.12 ¹⁴⁰⁷ *EP MAN OYCOYTIGI KITTEMEN!*

er man usutigì kittemen!

er man usu-ti=gi kittle-men
 2SG DEM laugh-NR=ACC be.silent-IMP:NEG

You do not silence that laughter!

- ⇒ I mock and scorn you.

M20.1 ¹⁴⁰⁸ *BΔĪNΔ ΔΟΥΓΓΟΥΓΕΔ ΕΚΙΝ, ΚΙΤΤΕΡΑΡ ΤΕΓΑΡ ΝΟΒΡΕΜΑ.*

baynad dunguged ekin, kitterar teegar nobrema.

baynad dungu=ged e-ki-n ...
 talking silver=INS be-COND-3SG:SUB

kitterar teeg-ar nobre-ma
 silence stay-NR gold-COP

When talking is [like] silver, staying silent is [like] gold.

- ⇒ Your silence is better than your talking.

M20.2 ¹⁴⁰⁹ *ΓΙΣΙΡΑΡ ΓΟΔΑΡΝΑ ΔΟΓΩΡ ΓΕΝΜΑ.*

gijirar gojarna dogoor genma.

¹⁴⁰⁷ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 215); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁴⁰⁸ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. For the corresponding MSA proverb, see A20.1.

¹⁴⁰⁹ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤĪ, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER; second interpretation from Muḥammad Mīrghani. As *dogoor* goes with the

gijir-ar goj-ar=na dogoor gen-ma
 listen-NR slaughter-NR=GEN COMP better-COP
 Listening is better than slaughtering [sacrifice].

- ⇒ To hear/obey is better than to feel (the negative consequences).
 ⇒ To hear some bad news is still better than to be killed.
 ⇒ Wait and listen before you make a judgement.

The proverb does not directly refer to the *'id al-Adḥa (kore duul)* when many Nubians like other Muslims slaughter a sheep.

M20.3 ¹⁴¹⁰ *owwelgi weemeel, xaarki yaa duurmunu.*

owwel=gi wee-mee-el xaar=gi aag duur-munu

first=ACC say-NEG-PTC:PF last=ACC PROG reach-NEG

The one who did not say [it] first, does not reach [say it] last.

- ⇒ If something important is not said at the beginning, neither will it be said at the end.

When during a conversation one hears a piece of news for the first time and concludes that the other one did not want to tell it before, the proverb is said.

M20.4 ¹⁴¹¹ *weēpēn weēpē dāmnoy.*

weereen weeree daamnu.

wee-ee=na wee-ee daa-munu

say-NR=GEN say-NR be.present-NEG

The talk of the talk does not exist.

- ⇒ There is nothing to say.

genitive, the clitic *'-na'* has been added in the morpheme line. However, it is not uttered.

¹⁴¹⁰ From Dahab Ḥisayn, Toshke.

¹⁴¹¹ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER.

M20.5 ¹⁴¹² *cāīr emā wō er wēcaN waTTIGI?*

saayir emaa woo er weesan wattigi?

saayir e-maa woo er wee-s-an watti=gi
 Q:LOC be-Q:PRT INT 2SG say-PRT2-3PL time=ACC

Oh, where have you been at the time they talked?

⇒ You come late! – Where have you been?

M20.6 ¹⁴¹³ *nī wēmā? allo wēca.*

nii weemaa? allo weesa.

nii wee-maa allo wee-s-a
 who say-Q:PRT just say-PRT2-3PL

Who said it? They just said it.

⇒ With widespread news the source is unknown.¹⁴¹⁴

⇒ I do not want to reveal the source of the message.

M20.7 ¹⁴¹⁵ *zamaān ā wēcoy, talle bōy; elekken ā wēroy, daGINEDA dāroy.*

zamaan aa weesu, talle buu; elekken aa weeru, jagined daaru.

zamaan aag wee-s-u talle buu ...
 earlier DUR say-PRT2-1PL walk STAT

elekken aag wee-r-u jagin-ed daa-r-u

now DUR say-NEUT-1PL push-PFV be.present-1PL

In earlier times we said: Walk. Now we say: Give me a push.

⇒ Times change: I used to be able to do things without effort, now everything exhausts me and I need help.

⇒ Things are becoming more expensive.

¹⁴¹² From St4; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muḥammad Šubḥi, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹⁴¹³ From St9; co-investigated with Muḥammad Šubḥi.

¹⁴¹⁴ Mattokki students, handwritten ms.

¹⁴¹⁵ From Jamāl al-Sayid, Meriye; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

M20.8 ¹⁴¹⁶ *ΙΚΚΟΔ ΚΩΝ ἄ Βαῖν, ωἔρ ΚΩΝ ἄ ΓΙΔΙΡ.*

iskod koon aa bayn, weer koon aa gijir.

iskod koo-n aag bayn weer koo-n aag gijir
 nine have-3SGDUR talk one have-3SGDUR listen
 Nine (of the total) talk and one (of the total) listens.

koon denotes part of total.

⇒ During a meeting the lively greetings of the newcomers interrupt the speaker repeatedly. He is unable to continue his talk.

M20.9 ¹⁴¹⁷ *ΕΡΤΟΝ ΜΟΥΡCᾶΔΚΙ, ΤΟΝΔΙΛΓΙ ΔΙΛΛΕ!*

erton mursaaiki, tonjilgi jille!

er=gon mursaa-j-ki, tonjil=gi jille-∅

2SG=CO lying-COND good=ACC remember-IMP:SG

When you are lying [to someone], remember the good [he did to you]!

⇒ Don't be tempted to lie!

⇒ Always tell the positive even if you are a liar.

⇒ If someone constantly talks negatively, remind him of the positive aspects.

variant *eron mursikattikin, tonjilgi jille!*

If you are a skilful liar, remember the good!

M20.10 ¹⁴¹⁸ *ΜΟΥΡCΙ ΔΑΡΡΑΓΙ ΚΩΜΝΟΥ.*

mursi darragi koomnu.

mursi darra=gi koor-munu

lie hidden.place=ACC have-NEG

¹⁴¹⁶ From Fathī ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. He changes *bayn* to *baygi*. The German doctor HERZFELD (1966b: 26) who lived in pre-*hijra* Dakke relates the proverb in a German translation: “Neun reden und einer hört zu.”

¹⁴¹⁷ From MEKKI MUHAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ; variant from Thābit Zāki.

¹⁴¹⁸ From Sayid al-Ḥasan, Aniiba.

The lie does not have a hidden place.

⇒ A lie cannot be kept secret and will be revealed.

M20.11 ¹⁴¹⁹ *ΚΟΥΜΜΑΩĒΡ ἄ ΔΕΡΡΙΤΑΚΚΙ.*

kummaweer aa jerritakki.

kumma=*weer aag jerri-takki*

story=INDF PROG happen-PASS

A story happened.

⇒ That is a strange incident/story.

4.21. Personality and Character traits

Here, proverbs deal with personality and character traits as kindness and tidiness. They describe the famous, attractive, blind, or needy person.

A21.1 ¹⁴²⁰ *ĒΩΑΚŌΛ.*

eewakool.

eewa-kool

reputation-ADJR

[He is] famous.

⇒ He is famous.

This proverb is a shortened version of A22.41, yet with a different meaning.

A21.2 ¹⁴²¹ *ΑΡΜἄΝ ΑΒἄΓΝ ΕΡΙΓΚΙ ΚŌΜΟΥΝ.*

armaan abaagn erigki koomun.

¹⁴¹⁹ From ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Seyaale.

¹⁴²⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 10); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 124) does not list any example sentence where *kool* is not preceded by =*gi*. However, both Ḥāmid Khabīr and Kamal Hussein confirm that in this case *kool* is not preceded by =*gi*. One reason assumed is that *eewa kool* as a whole represents an adjective.

¹⁴²¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 166); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza.

armaan abaag=n erig=gi koor-mun
 <name> back=GEN mind=ACC have-NEG
 Armaan does not have a mind of the back.

armaan is a name denoting any person. It can also mean any member of the *armaan* kinship group in the Dongola Reach.

⇒ He does not plan in advance.

A21.3 ¹⁴²² *CEPEΓ ĀWIL, MILLIGI NALMOYN.*

sereeg aawil, milligi nalmun.

seree=gi aaw-il milli=gi nal-mun
 good=ACC make-PTC:IPF bad=ACC see-NEG

The one who does the good, does not see the bad.

⇒ Encouragement of people to do good deeds.

A21.4 ¹⁴²³ *CEPEΓ ĀWIL, İĀ KŌYMANIN İĀ BŌLANIN.*

sereeg aawil, yaa kuumanin yaa boolanin.

seree=gi aaw-il yaa kuuman-in ...
 good=ACC make-PTC:IPF CO:either swell-3SG

yaa boolan-in

CO:or woman.without.uterus-3SG

He who does the good, either he swells, or he is a woman without a uterus.

yaa ... yaa either ... or

⇒ When someone does a good deed, people do not always thank him.

⇒ When doing something good, do not expect others to praise you.

¹⁴²² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein and Hishām Bashīr.

¹⁴²³ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 207); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein, Thourya Muḥammad.

A21.5 ¹⁴²⁴ *MĀRE BEΔAGI KŌMOYN.*

maare bedagi koomun.

maa-re beda=gi koor-mun
tired-NR surprise=ACC have-NEG

Tiredness does not have a surprise.

⇒ Tiredness is not unexpected. A hard worker should not be surprised if he is tired.

A21.6 ¹⁴²⁵ *ΓΟΣΚΙ ΓΟΣΚΙ ΤΕΡΚΙΡΙΓĪ ΔΟΛΜΟΥΝ.*

goski goski terkirigii dolmun.

goski goski ter=kirii=gi dol-mun
desire [desire 3SG=SIM]=ACC love-NEG

The desiring one does not like the one who desires similar to him.

⇒ Two people with the same bad habits never like each other. Someone who is used to be served first (as when getting food) does not like someone else who also wants to be treated first. Someone who talks a lot does not like another great talker. The proverb describes such people.

A21.7 ¹⁴²⁶ *AR AΔEMGI MŌNMOYNOY, TENN ΦĪΛ ΓΑĪĀBKI MŌNIN.*

ar ademgi moonmunu, tenn fiil gayaabki moonin.

ar adem=gi moon-munu ...

1PL human=ACC reject-NEG

tenn fiil gayaab=gi moon-in

3SG:POSS behaviour shameful=ACC reject-3SG

We do not reject the human, he rejects his shameful behaviour.

gayaab (Ar. loanword) means in Arabic ‘absent’.

¹⁴²⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

¹⁴²⁵ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb.

¹⁴²⁶ From Ḥasan Tambal, Dibela; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein. It is considered a wisdom saying. Muṣṭafa Samiltood regards it as a typical northern Andaandi sentence construction.

⇒ Distinguish between a human being and his deeds!

A21.8 ¹⁴²⁷ ΓΟΥΡΡΑΤΤΙ ΜΟΝΚΙΝ, ΓΟΥΡΕΡ ΜΟΝΙΝ.

gurratti moonkin, guureer moonin.

gurratti moon-ki-n *guureer* moon-in
joy reject-COND-3SG fertile.soil reject-3SG

When the joy refuses [to come to you], the fertile soil refuses [it also].

guureer derived from *guu* ‘land, field’ and denotes the fertile soil between the house and the river Nile.

⇒ You have to work hard to achieve joy and happiness.

⇒ If he is not even happy at a wedding, he will never be happy.

⇒ We already do everything for you, what else can we do for you?

⇒ Even a very good football player needs luck in front of the goal.

A21.9 ¹⁴²⁸ ΤΕΝΝ ΓΕΔΙΜΓΙ ΙΩΕΛ, ΤΟΥΨΩΞΕΚΟΝ.

tenn gediimgi iiwel, tushsheekon.

tenn *gediim*=gi *iiw-el* *tushshee-ko-n*
3SG:POSSold=ACC forget-PTC:PF stray.LV-PRT1-3SG

The one who forgot his past, strays [loses his way].

⇒ You have to work hard to achieve joy and happiness.

⇒ Don’t forget the past!¹⁴²⁹

M21.1 ¹⁴³⁰ ΕΡΙΓΚΑΤΤΙ ΑΤΑΒΑ ΓΙΡ ΟΩΩΙΓ Ἄ ΔΟΜΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

erigkatti ataba gir owwig aa jommuu.

¹⁴²⁷ From ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Merowaarti East; co-investigated with Hishām Bashīr, Akashe Muḥammad.

¹⁴²⁸ From taxi driver in Dongola; co-investigated with Megdi ‘Ali.

¹⁴²⁹ That would be shameful. Cf. BOURDIEU 1966: 210.

¹⁴³⁰ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; ; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber.

erig-katti ataba gir owwi=gi ...
 reason-skilful door.lentil time two=ACC
aag jom-munu
 PROG beat-NEG

The wise person does not hit the door lentil twice.

⇒ He learns from his mistakes.

In the morning, when a Mattokki woman was cleaning the door lentil, she checked to see if there was anything was on it. If there was, it meant that someone wanted to curse. The woman either did not take it seriously; or she added some ashes, meaning that she accepted the challenge.

MSA: لا يُلدَغ مؤمن من جحر مرتين.

“A believer is not bitten twice from the same snake.”¹⁴³¹

M21.2¹⁴³² *TENN ERIGNA GEΔΔIN ΔOGOOP ā āPPOY.*

tenn erigna geddin dogoor aa aarru.

tenna erig=na geddi=na dogoo=ro ...

3SG:POSS mind=GEN as.much.as=GEN top=LOC

aag aar-r-u

PROG take-NEUT-1PL

We take [only] as much as to the top of his mind.

⇒ We do not expect anything which he does not understand.

⇒ We'll take it as they told us.

M21.3¹⁴³³ *TEP KŌLAN DIGRIL, ā OΦMOYNOY.*

ter koolan digril, aa onymunu.

¹⁴³¹ SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 105. It is taken from *ḥadīth*, the Islamic collections of Muhammad's sayings.

¹⁴³² From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Khālid Kalos, Aḥmad 'Uthmān.

¹⁴³³ From St63; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ replaces *digiril* by *digirel*, e.g. using the preterit. Cf. M19.21.

ter koolan digir-il aag ony-munu
3SG alone fall-PTC:IPF PROG weep-NEG

The one who falls down by his own fault does not cry.

⇒ Everyone is responsible for his own mistakes.

M21.4 ¹⁴³⁴ *ΦΕΛΑΝΔΙ, ΔΑΓΙΝ Τᾶλ, ΒΙ ΒΟΡΚΙΔΔΙΜΝΟΥ.*

felanji, jagin taal, bi boorkiddimnu.

felanji jagin taar-il bi boor-kiddi-munu
someone push come-PTC:IPF TAM collapse-CAUS-NEG

Someone will not cause the one who comes pushing [is proactive] to collapse.

⇒ He is a strong and wealthy man.

⇒ If you buy something of good quality, it will last a long time.

⇒ When you marry a girl young she will not become an old spinster.

variant *felanji jaginkira, bi boorminu.*

If they push him, he will not collapse.

M21.5 ¹⁴³⁵ *ΑΨΙΡΤΟΔ ΕΔΚΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΙᾶΜα ΒΙ ᾀΩCOY.*

ashirtood edkin goon, yaama bi aawsu.

ashir-tood ed-ki-n goon ...
pretty-QUAL marry-COND-3SG SUB

yaama bi aaw-s-u
often TAM make-PRT2-3SG

And if the little pretty one had married, she would have made even more.

¹⁴³⁴ From St27; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi; variant from Thābit Zāki and Maḥmūd Muḥammad.

¹⁴³⁵ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. This is the only sentence where *-ki* and *goon* go together. It would need further analysis.

⇒ Realising that she is pretty she already behaves arrogantly. How would she conduct herself if she got married?

M21.6 ¹⁴³⁶ *EP CAβPĒKI, EP BAPAKAΓI İĀ ELI.*

er sabreeki, er barakagi yaa eli.

er sabree-ki er baraka=gi aag el-i

2SG patience-COND 2SG blessing=ACC PROG find-2SG

When you are patient, you will find blessing.

⇒ Encouragement to be patient.

M21.7 ¹⁴³⁷ *ZŌLIGI TINNA ZĀLOY MOYΓOCIP!*

zooligi tinna haalu mugosir!

zooli=gi tinna haal-u ...

people=ACC 3PL:POSS state-3SG:POSS

mug-os-ir-Ø

leave-PFV-PL:OBJ-IMP:SG

Leave the people in their state!

haal (Ar. loanword) is here rendered as “state”.¹⁴³⁸ The Arabic POSS suffix *-u* is grammatically incorrect, it should be *haalhum* ‘their state’. Nubians whose second language is Arabic do not strictly keep to the rules of Arabic. The regular POSS marker is found in Nubian *tinna*.

⇒ Don’t attempt to change someone else!

⇒ Show tolerance instead of criticising.

¹⁴³⁶ From Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ, Merwaw.

¹⁴³⁷ From Ismā‘īl al-‘Abādi, Debood; co-investigated with Fatḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

¹⁴³⁸ MASSENBAACH 1933: 172.

M21.8 ¹⁴³⁹ *anna zemmī galiilmeninga, taa, aa jooreedeeni.*

anna hemmi galiilmeninga, taa, aa jooreedeeni.

anna hemmi galiil-menin-ga ...

1SG:POSS worries small-NEG-CO

taar aag jooree-deen-i

come PROG be.sad-1REC-2SG

As my worries are not small, come, you give [it] to me.

⇒ Don't cry to me! I have got enough troubles of my own and do not need anyone to make me worry even more.

M21.9 ¹⁴⁴⁰ *kilkil tamtamg aa atta.*

kilkil tamtamg aa atta.

kilkil tamtam=gi aag attar-Ø

tickling.feeling problem=ACC PROG bring-3SG

Lots of laughter brings the problem.

kilkil In Islam one is forbidden to laugh in a mosque. Also, "Some of the [people in the Sudan] think that those who laugh often are not in the least dignified, they are making themselves childish."¹⁴⁴¹

⇒ He laughs too much.

⇒ Laughter is followed by bad news.

SCA: .كثرة المزاح تخيب النطاح. – "Too much joking causes fighting."

ECA: .إللي يزيد عن حده، ينقلب لضده.

¹⁴³⁹ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, *Jebel Togoog*; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi, Fathī 'Abd al-Sayid. There are different versions of how the loanword *galiil* works with its suffixes. Muḥammad Ṣubḥi prefers *galiil engano*. On the whole, Arabic loanwords in Nubian proverbs create variety.

¹⁴⁴⁰ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, *Toshke*. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 276. Compare also Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5: "A man may smile and smile and smile, and be a villain."

¹⁴⁴¹ NORDENSTAM 1968: 121; quoting one of his Northern Sudanese students.

“Where there is too much joking it turns around to its opposite.”

M21.10 ¹⁴⁴² *ZŌλ Γαρριν ΔοΓŌρ ā ΖαΓρĒρα.*

zool garrin dogoor aa hagreera.

zool garri=na dogoor aag hagreer-a

person bad=GEN COMP PROG look.greedy.LV-NEUT-3PL

They look greedier than an evil person.

⇒ Obtaining nothing is better than dealing with a greedy person.

M21.11 ¹⁴⁴³ *ZŌλ ΓΖĒρι ωαλλα ΔĪΜΝΟΥ ωαλλα ΔαΒΟСМОУΝΟΥ.*

zool gheeri walla diimnu walla dabosmunu.

zool gheeri walla dii-munu walla dab-os-munu

person bad CO die-NEG CO disapper-PFV-NEG

The bad person neither dies nor disappears.

⇒ I do not like his presence, yet he always turns up.

M21.12 ¹⁴⁴⁴ *ZŌλ ΔŌψ Γιρ Οωωιγι Κατρερ ā ΔΟΜΤακκι.*

zool doosh gir owwigi katreer aa jomtakki.

zool doosh gir owwi=gi katree=ro ...

person crazy times two=ACC wall=LOC

aag jom-takki

PROG beat-PASS

A crazy person is hit twice by the [same] wall.

⇒ He does not learn from his mistakes.

¹⁴⁴² From St17; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer.

¹⁴⁴³ From Jamāl al-Sayid, Meriye; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. He replaces the loanword *gheeri* by the Nubian lexemes *garri* or *milli*.

¹⁴⁴⁴ From St53; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer. The proverb has the opposite meaning to M21.1.

M21.13 ¹⁴⁴⁵ *αργοῦνα δῶψ ζῶλιν ἀγίλιν δογοῦρ γενμα.*

arguuna doosh zoolin aagilin dogoor genma.

arguuna doosh zooli=na aagil-i=na ...

1PL:POSS crazy people=GEN understanding-PL=GEN

dogoor gen-ma

COMP better-COP

Our craziness is better than the understandings of the people.

doosh symbolises the little a poor Nubian possessed.

⇒ One single broken cup owned by oneself is still better than the many unbroken cups of someone else.

M21.14 ¹⁴⁴⁶ *δελλα ἐρ σαῖῖρ βι δῶϋ? αἰ ἀνν δογοῦρ κοσῶεῖρναῖ δῶϋ
βῶϋρι.*

jella er saayir bi juu? ay ann dogoor kosweernay juu buuri.

jella er saayir bi juur-∅ ay ...

spoilt.one 2SG Q:LOC TAM go-2SG 1SG

ann dogoor kos=weer=nay juur buu-r-i

1SG:POSSCOMP bad=INDF=AD go PROG-NEUT-1SG

Spoilt one, where will you go? – [Answer:] I go to a worse one.

⇒ He considers himself as better than others.

M21.15 ¹⁴⁴⁷ *μανδο δῶϋσι, ῥετο λετο ελσι.*

mando juusi, heeto leeto elsi.

mando juur-s-i heeto leeto el-s-i

there go-PRT2-1SG good.ones bad.ones find-PRT2-1SG

I went there, I met the good and the bad ones.

⇒ It was very crowded.

¹⁴⁴⁵ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke.

¹⁴⁴⁶ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Fatḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid’s mother-in-law, Asmaa A. Kenawy, Aḥmad Gumma’. The first one replaces *aadelgi* by *fala*, the last one by *adelee*.

¹⁴⁴⁷ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab.

The proverb may be said after one returns from a wedding celebration.

M21.16 ¹⁴⁴⁸ *ŌȲĈĒ TĀKA, aPΓ ā COYNNEKIPPA.*

uusee taaka, arg aa sunnekirra.

uus-ee taar-ka ar=gi aag sunne-gir-r-a

bad-NR come-CO 1PL=ACC PROG smell-CAUS-NEUT-3PL

The waste comes, and they cause us to smell [it].

⇒ One creates havoc and instead of taking responsibility just smiles about it.

⇒ The one who causes the problem blames someone else.

M21.17 ¹⁴⁴⁹ *ŌȲĈĒ TĀKA, KOİİP ā WĀBTIPPI.*

uusee taaka, koyir aa shaabtirri.

uus-ee taar-ga koy=ir aag shaab-tir-r-i

bad-NR come-CO face=LOC DUR wipe.off-2/3REC-NEUT-1SG

The waste comes, and in [from] the face I wipe it off.

⇒ You may talk negatively about me; however, that does not concern me.

English: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words shall never hurt me.

M21.18 ¹⁴⁵⁰ *ZAMANWĒP BI TĀ, ZŌLI WITĒΔ MITĒΔ BI TŌPA.*

zamanweer bi taa, zooli shiteed miteed bi toora.

zaman=weer bi taar-∅ ...

time=INDF TAM come-3SG

zooli shiteed miteed bi toor-r-a

people <shiteed> <miteed> TAM enter-NEUT-3PL

A time will come when people will enter *shiteed* and *miteed*.

¹⁴⁴⁸ From Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

¹⁴⁴⁹ From Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm, Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid. The last one replaces *shaab* by *kassi* ‘to whitewash’.

¹⁴⁵⁰ From al-Ḥajj ‘Awaḍ ‘Ali, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

shiteed miteed are meaningless words.

⇒ Customs and tradition change. They will change even more.

M21.19 ¹⁴⁵¹ *ZAMANWĒP BI TĀ, TIMBEC TIMBECKI BI ĪPMOYNOY.*

zamanweer bi taa, timbes timbeski bi iirmunu.

zaman=weer bi taar -Ø ...

time=INDF TAM come-3SG

tim-bes tim-bes=gi bi iir-munu

3SG:POSS-brother 3SG:POSS-brother TAM know-NEG

A time will come, a brother will not know his brother
[anymore].

⇒ Stop being angry with your brother.

4.22. House and Household

House and household is another domain where massive change has happened. Building techniques have altered. A few decades ago in an average Nubian household most contemporary household items would not have been found. The proverbs describe an environment as it was before the *hijra* and the advent of modern technology.¹⁴⁵²

Building a Nubian house (*kaa*) was a community event in itself, where each villager supported the other, as when participating in a *feza*, described in the next semantic domain. The builders considered and respected the Nubian way of life and their desire to offer hospitality. “The old Nubian house was not only a shelter, it was a way of life and a view of the world.”¹⁴⁵³ Houses were

¹⁴⁵¹ From al-Ḥajj ‘Awaḍ ‘Ali, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁴⁵² In April 2019 the TU Berlin organised an International Conference on ‘Vernacular Architecture as frame of life in historic and ancient communities’. One emphasis was on the Mattokki island Bicca south of Aswan that was inhabited until the 1970s. During that conference I presented a paper ‘House and Household Items in Andaandi and Mattokki Nubian Wise Sayings and Proverbs’ (JAEGER 2023). It offers a condensed version of this semantic domain.

¹⁴⁵³ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 218:

one-storied, made from mud-brick. Additionally dried stalks and sticks were added, realising however, that during flooding it could easily be destroyed.¹⁴⁵⁴

In the Dongola Reach the crossbeam (*mirig*) made from the trunk of the palm tree supported the flat roof (*nuur*). Other beams were taken from other trees. Palm branches were put on top, then a layer of thatch made of wheat stubble, then a layer of sheep/goat mud. It needed to dry for one or two days until the roof was ready and rainproof in a climate where it rained less than once a year. Among the Mattokki roofing techniques included barrel-vaulted roofing such as is still visible in some homes in West Aswan and West Sehel.¹⁴⁵⁵

The Nubian house, or ‘homestead’ or ‘houses’ (*kaaci*), and the spacious courtyard (Ar. *ḥōsh*) are surrounded by walls (*katre/katree*) made from Nile mud, increasing in height the further away from the river Nile to keep out wild animals living in the desert, also providing shade during daytime. The couple of rooms include a guest room or even a separate house for guests. An extra courtyard may be dedicated for women. Each day the courtyard is cleansed.¹⁴⁵⁶

House walls were also to protect the inside from evil spirits. In the early 1960s just before the *hijra*, an inhabitant from Debood village advised the architect Roweis Shoukry: Do not ask people whether a house is beautiful or not. Houses are either protecting against evil spirits, or not. Goats are beautiful.¹⁴⁵⁷

¹⁴⁵⁴ As during the flood of 1964 in Hamennaarti. (Ma‘rūf Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ 2018, p.c.)

¹⁴⁵⁵ Kamal Hussein 2005, p.c. Cf. YASSER OSMAN 1990: 137-138: “Although the barrel-vaulted roof dated back to Ancient Egyptian times and the remains of the X-group, it was not popular with the Nubians as a construction method. ... Travelers [passing] through Nubia did not mention the use of this system of roofing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was popular in Daraw, 20 miles north of Aswan, ... [When] the Kunūzi ... were forced to move their villages to higher ground after the flooding caused by the first Aswan Dam they adopted the barrel-vaulted system and received help from builders in Daraw.”

¹⁴⁵⁶ Nāsir al-Guma’s sister 2017, p.c.; Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.; both talking about the pre-*hijra* houses. Semantic domain 17 deals with ‘Hospitality’.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Shoukry Roweis 2019, p.c.

“The entrances of the houses were always oriented toward the Nile.”¹⁴⁵⁸ Otherwise a Nubian house is directed toward the inside, windows are rare, even if the view is scenic. It is a refuge where one feels at ease (Ar. *mūrṭāh*).¹⁴⁵⁹ Still, there is no Nubian term for such a concept, the closest expression being *neew buu* (lit.: ‘having breath’).

If necessary the entrance was locked with a wooden lock (*dabba*). After the *hijra*, these locks were in use until the 1970s.¹⁴⁶⁰ Still, except for the door lentil (cf. M21.1), the door itself and its lock do not occur in Nubian proverbs.

Domestic animals were kept in the rear of the house, toward the hills, with its own back entrance (Ar. loanword: *baab sir*, lit.: ‘secret door’). Without toilets in the house, it was also used when there was a need to relieve oneself.¹⁴⁶¹

Most rooms of the house are not designated by a specific Nubian term. If necessary, Arabic loanwords are employed. An exception is the *deew(n) kaa* (kitchen, lit.: ‘the house of the metal baking plate’) where bread is baked and food prepared. In the past the cooking vessel or baking plate was put on three or sometimes four stones (*ubarte/ugree*), with the stones sitting directly on the floor and the fire (*iig*) in-between. Care was taken to prevent the fire spreading behind the fireplace. Dried stalks and sticks (*kashshi*) were the fire’s fuel, as wood was rare. Before the introduction of matches, a carefully guarded log would keep the fire for up to twenty-four hours.¹⁴⁶² The resulting ash (*uburti*) symbolises negative events:

[I]t [i]s not taken to mean the remains of firewood, but rather everything that was evil and wicked and awful. Thus, every time a

¹⁴⁵⁸ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 215. After the construction of the first Aswan Dam in 1902 the northern Mattokki villages offered less space, making it necessary to place the entrance wherever possible.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Salah Abdallah Salem 2019, p.c., an architect from the Wadi al-Arab south of the Mattokki region, discussed these aspects with me.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2016, p.c.

¹⁴⁶¹ ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2020, p.c. There is no longer a back entrance in the resettlement villages. Especially women are missing it. (AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 48)

¹⁴⁶² In February 2017 ‘Atīāt Sāti from Khannaag village invited us when she baked date bread. She had learnt baking at the age of five years. She replaced the three stones with three aluminium cans. – Also related by A. Goo-Grauer 2022, p.c.

catastrophe occurred in their village, the women would dig their hands into the uburty [ash] and smear their faces and heads with ash before wailing and dancing the dance of the bereaved.¹⁴⁶³

Fire and ash are the most common metaphors of this domain. The smoke (*tulla/gusutti*) is seen everywhere.

Palm trees provided most of the building material for the house's interior and for making ropes (noun: *iri* / verb: *iir*): First one collects palm bast (*ashma*). Second one puts the *ashma* in water. Third one picks the *ashma* into pieces (*billi*). Fourth one takes the separate pieces one by one and twists them together. Finally one ties one end of a rope on a tree or wedge and twists it from the other end (*ibirtigi undur*), then leaves it there for a few hours until the twisting can no longer be undone, which gives the rope enough strength not to break.¹⁴⁶⁴

Inside the house, one rests comfortably on the wooden sleeping bench or bed (*angare/angaree*), made of acacia wood with interwoven strings or ropes, or the wooden bench with backrest (*dakka/dikke* or variant *dikka*). During the hot summer months it is brought into the courtyard. One sat on a stool (Ar. loanword *bambar*. There were no wardrobes or chairs.¹⁴⁶⁵

Another option for sitting is the mat (*nibid*) hand-sewn by women, in the past made from palm fronds.¹⁴⁶⁶ In the Dongola Reach one can find the large *bishante* mat made from palm leaves or reed, being in use since a long time ago, in contrast to the *nibid* that is a more recent development. If it is used as a prayer mat a piece is added to indicate the direction of Mecca. As a sleeping mat it is laid straight on the floor or on the *angare/angaree*.

After work and especially around the time of sunset the Mattokki prefer to sit outside or in the courtyard on a wall bench (*suru*) made from Nile mud or

¹⁴⁶³ GILMORE 2016: 122-123, based on the writing of the Nubian writer Haggag Hassan Oddoul. Gilmore spells *uburty*.

¹⁴⁶⁴ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2011, p.c. Instead the same could be done by two men, each one holding one end of the rope and twisting it in opposite direction.

¹⁴⁶⁵ A. Goo-Grauer 2014 and 2019, p.c.; 'Abd al-Rahman 'Awaḍ 2019, p.c.; Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.

stone where it is less hot than inside, enjoying the fresh cool breeze from the river Nile. There news is exchanged between the inhabitants of the house and other villagers through *wanasa*.¹⁴⁶⁷ By contrast, sitting outside during daytime may be interpreted as laziness, especially in winter.

In the early 18th century a Nubian owned only a very few household items:

All their cooking-vessels are composed of one or two earthen pots in which they cook their meals, ... Their ... drinking-vessel is a hollowed pumpkin split in the middle ... they have no table-cloth but use the bare ground or a mat twisted out of the bark of palm-trees; each of the servants has a mill to grind the wheat or durra.¹⁴⁶⁸

Similar in the 19th century:

The utensils of a Nubian's house consist of about half a dozen coarse earthen jars, from one to two feet in diameter, and about five feet in height, in which all the provisions of the family are kept; a few earthen plates; a hand-mill; a hatchet; and a few round sticks, over which the loom is laid.¹⁴⁶⁹

A German traveller reported about a bedroom on Elephantine Island in 1905:

...some old cloths and discarded coats are the only thing they need for a good night's sleep. A wardrobe, [or] a chest of drawers is not found anywhere in the village.¹⁴⁷⁰

Later, prior to the *hijra*, a large wooden chest (Ar. loanword *sanduug* or its variant *sunduug*) became common, brought along at the wedding. The Star of David was a popular motif portrayed on such a chest.¹⁴⁷¹ At the *hijra* the little

¹⁴⁶⁷ A. Goo-Grauer 2019, p.c.

¹⁴⁶⁸ HERZOG 1957b: 126; quoting Theodor Krump's travel account.

¹⁴⁶⁹ BURCKHARDT 1819: 141.

¹⁴⁷⁰ As the text does not mention any name I assume it to be the traveller Theodor Ziemendorff, and therefore quote as ZIEMENDORFF 1905: 28. – In the German original: “[E]inige alte Tücher und abgelegte Mäntel sind das Einzige, was ihnen für ihre Nachtruhe not tut. Einen Schrank, eine Kommode sucht man im ganzen Orte vergeblich.”

¹⁴⁷¹ In a hotel in West Sehel the chest stood the wrong way round with the star being invisible, as nowadays the Star of David carries other connotations.

furniture there was, was marked with its owner's name and transported by lorry to the resettlement area. It was unloaded in a large village square where everyone picked out their own belongings and carried them to their new home.

Each home stored its food, as only just prior to the *hijra* the first village shops were opened in the houses of better-off residents providing limited goods. The containers for grain and dates (*gussa/gussee*) were built into the house. As a result, they could not be moved at the *hijra* and were lost.¹⁴⁷² Non-liquid items are carried in large baskets (*shibir*).

Drinking water is stored in a large, almost conical jar (*gaalo/barraad*), made of porous clay that keeps it cool. The mud settles at the bottom, the clear water remains at the top. Many families in the Dongola Reach change its water and clean it daily. Above it a small cup for fetching and drinking water is kept. In the past it was made from the thick shell of the pumpkin (*kebel/kebee*).

Hot food, especially *fatta*¹⁴⁷³, was eaten from an earthen bowl (*kisib*), shared by up to 15 people. It was also used for drinking milk.¹⁴⁷⁴ When carried, food is still covered by a braided lid (*aba/tagaddi*). Today, the earthen bowl (*kisib*) has been mainly replaced by a plate. However, the *tagaddi* represents food in folkloristic activities.¹⁴⁷⁵ In Agade, a village where in 2010 the Andaandi language was still very much alive, we observed a young daughter still making a braided lid for her dowry in the customary style.

The knife (*kandi*) is a dagger with blades on both sides. It is to be distinguished from the kitchen knife (*kanyir*) with a blade on one side only. It is smaller than a sword (*siwid*) yet more dangerous. Among the Mattokki a

¹⁴⁷² Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.; also the preceding paragraph. The *gussee* as a metaphor can be found in each of the semantic domains 6 'Agriculture: Harvesting, Milling' and 7 'Agriculture: Date Palm'.

¹⁴⁷³ TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 49: "dish of soup, sauce or stew poured over crumbled bread". In Nubia I have also eaten it with bread crumbled over rice.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Mekki Muḥammad 2019, p.c.; Hisayn Shellāli 2022, p.c.

¹⁴⁷⁵ As by a music ensemble from the Egyptian Nubian village Toshke who danced at the opening ceremony of an international conference for folklore in Cairo in 2014.

kandi is considered a weapon.¹⁴⁷⁶ Farmers always carry one as a tool for work purposes. A traveller two-hundred years ago commented:

The Nubians seldom go unarmed; as soon as a boy grows up, his first endeavour is to purchase a short, crooked knife, which the men wear tied over the left elbow, under their shirt, and which they draw upon each other at the slightest quarrel.¹⁴⁷⁷

Until recently among Dongolawi Nubians supporting another Nubian with one's *kandi* was an unpaid job. Instead, one received a non-monetary return. In the case of a butcher, he got some of the meat after slaughtering. The *kandi* is also a symbol of the groom, besides the sword and the whip (*kori*/Ar. loanword *kurbaj*).¹⁴⁷⁸ In Andaandi, the knife behaves in an animate way: *kandi aanyil* (lit.: 'the living knife') means 'the sharp knife'; *kandi dii buul* (lit.: 'the dead knife') means 'the unsharpened knife'.

The axe (*gambu*) occurs in conjunction with other household items, such as the needle (*intille/ittille*). The former one is stored in the house and used to cut date palms. It is to be distinguished from the smaller hatchet (*nawud* or *naud*).

The new houses constructed at the *hijra* in 1963/64 neglected Nubian cultural traits and societal organisation. The courtyards are minimal in size, making daily life in the hot climate difficult and customary celebrations nearly impossible. Houses have fewer rooms. In all, it offers one's family much less protection from the outside and opportunities to entertain guests. Instead, the new style of construction forced an outside worldview on Nubians, resulting in immigrants having some traumatic experiences during their initial period in the resettlement villages, changing their inner well-being.¹⁴⁷⁹

¹⁴⁷⁶ The difference between Andaandi *kandi* and Mattokki *kandi* was discussed by the Dongolawi Shawqi 'Abd al-'Aziz and the Mattokki Muḥammad Ṣubḥi (2023, p.c.).

¹⁴⁷⁷ BURCKHARDT 1819: 142. Contemporary Nubians contrast their perceived peacefulness with Arab poetry where warriors are the heroes. They conclude that it is an inherent part of their nature even if there is no specific term to describe it.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; and TRIMINGHAM 1949: 8. The whip appears in A17.3.

¹⁴⁷⁹ PAESLER (2018: 118-124) and the architect Salah Abdallah Salem (2019, p.c.) discuss change in health conditions in the resettlement houses.

Building styles continue to change, especially in areas where money sent from immigrants to the Arab Gulf and Europe to their relatives in Nubia supports building concrete, multi-storeyed houses. Mud brick houses are increasingly disliked as modern appliances are more difficult to be installed and dust gathers more easily. At the most, elements considered as ‘traditional’ are imitated.¹⁴⁸⁰ As cement replaces the Nile mud, rooms do not cool down at night as before. In the Dongola Reach, roofing from corrugated iron has been favoured due to heavier rainfall since the construction of the Merowe High Dam. One advantage is that it cannot be destroyed by termites.¹⁴⁸¹

Also household items and their production techniques have changed. Soon after the *hijra* wardrobes (Ar. *dūlāb*), chairs, china plates and other contemporary items ‘Made in China’ were introduced. While the resettlement villages were connected to the electric grid a few decades ago, in 2008 all of the Dongola Reach received round-the-clock electricity.¹⁴⁸² Only to a limited extent and in certain areas, as on the islands, a visitor is reminded to a certain extent of the former way of life as referred to in the proverbs.

Besides looking into the physical aspects of the Nubian house (*kaa*) I analyse its non-tangible aspects that refer to wife, children, and other relatives who live in the house or are dependent on the head of the household for support. Even two Nubians residing in different villages, yet belonging to the same kinship group, may be considered part of the same *kaa*. This is especially striking as there is no specific Andaandi and Mattokki lexeme denoting ‘family’:

While *nog* [Fadijja equivalent to *kaa*] referred to the physical house, it also referred to another set of relations between the individual and other persons and groups in the society. ... This affiliation with a *bait* [Arabic, meaning ‘house’] provides the member with a sense of

¹⁴⁸⁰ Mariam S. Marei 2019, p.c. She is doing research in Bharīf village north of Aswan. While not being inhabited by Nubians it shows similar patterns of architectural change.

¹⁴⁸¹ Muḥammad Ḥasan and Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2019, p.c.

¹⁴⁸² In the Mattokki village of Seyaale one host honoured me by offering tea and biscuits on china ware bought in 1967, three years after the *hijra*. – Seyaale was connected to the electric grid in 1974/75; ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2019, p.c.

identity and belonging. ... Marriage indicates the start of a new *nog* composed of a man and his wife, where the man is responsible for the household.¹⁴⁸³

When describing negative characteristics an Andaandi speaker may say: *in an kaar daamun* ‘This does not exist in my family.’ The meaning of *kaa* may even be broader and denote the village (Ar.: *balad*): *ann kaar nog buuri* ‘I go to my village.’¹⁴⁸⁴

While the Nubian house changes its meaning as the central focus of the extended family, even more so for the flats most urban Nubians reside in with only up to two generations living together; some Nubians even discern a growing individualism. One Fadijja Nubian and similarly other Nubians express it in this way: “Until a few years after the *hijra*, ‘I’ meant ‘my people’, now it means ‘I myself’.” As a result, at least among Mattokki the reference of *kaa* to the family is gradually being lost. Instead the plural suffix *-gul/-guu*, nowadays mainly used with kinship terms, also denotes the family, as in *hasangu(u)* ‘Hasan and his family’, or ‘Hasan and the ones belonging to him’, or *aligu(u)* ‘Ali and his family’.¹⁴⁸⁵

A22.1 ¹⁴⁸⁶ *KĀ TENNDI WĀʔEN, IPINΔIGI NŌYʔKIPIN.*

kaa tenndi waanyen, irindigi nuurkirin.

kaa ter-ndi waanye-n iri-ndi=gi nuurkir-in
house 3SG-POSS be.without-3SG people-POSS=ACC roof-3SG

His house is without [roof], he roofs what belongs to [other] people.

nuur Just as the roof protects the residents from the scorching sun, the head of the household is responsible for protecting the members of his household.

¹⁴⁸³ YASSER OSMAN 1990: 130-131.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Kamal Hussein 2018, p.c.

¹⁴⁸⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2018, p.c.; ‘Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2019, p.c.; also in MASSENBACH 1933: 110.

¹⁴⁸⁶ From ḤAMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 33); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah, Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The proverb has the same meaning as A22.27.

⇒ He has enough work for himself and his relatives yet still helps others.

A22.2 ¹⁴⁸⁷ *KĀP ĀGIL ZALAĞED DĀLN OΦMICCIGI KACCI ĞĀΦIN.*

kaar aagil halaged daaln onymissegi kassi gaanyin.

kaa=r aag-il hala=ged daa-l=n ...

house=LOC stay-PTC:IPF desert=INS be.present-PTC:IPF=GEN

onymissi=gi kassi gaany-in

tears=ACC whitewash lick-3SG

He who is staying in the house [and relaxing], [asks] the one [who worked hard and comes in] from the desert to whitewash and lick the tears.

⇒ He is lazy and asks a poor and hard-working person for a favour.

A22.3 ¹⁴⁸⁸ *KĀN MIRIGKI COKKEΛ, TENN AΡΑΓΚΕΔ COKKEN.*

kaan mirigki sokkel, tenn aragked sokken.

kaa=n mirig=gi sokker-il ...

house=GEN cross.beam=ACC carry-PTC:IPF

tenn arag=ged sokker-n

3SG:POSS sweat=INS carry-3SG

The one who carries the crossbeam of the house, carries [it] with his sweat.

arag (Ar. loanword) is the synonym of Nubian *tilleriid*.

⇒ Take full responsibility!

⇒ You have to carry everything with your own strength.

A22.4 ¹⁴⁸⁹ *ΔΟΥΛ ΚĀN MIRIGOYN.*

duul kaan mirigun.

¹⁴⁸⁷ From Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Hamennaarti.

¹⁴⁸⁸ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-‘Aal Şadīq, Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁴⁸⁹ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi.

duul kaa=n mirig-un
old house=GEN cross.beam-COP

The elder is the crossbeam of the house.

⇒ Honour an elderly person as he is most important for the whole household.

A22.5 ¹⁴⁹⁰ *KĀN MIPIG FOYŪŪIOCKON.*

kaan mirig gushshioskon.

kaa=n mirig gushshi-os-ko-n
house=GEN cross.beam get.broken-PFV-PRT1-3SG

The crossbeam of the house has got broken.

⇒ An elderly person has died.

A22.6 ¹⁴⁹¹ *ENN KĀĪON GEZĀZA EKI, TOKKON NALLIḌMEN!*

enn kaayon gezaaza eki, tokkon nallijmen!

enn kaa=yon gezaaza e-ki ...
2SG:POSShouse-COND glass be-COND

tokkon nalli-j-men

IMP:NEG hit-INTF-IMP:NEG

If your house is [made of] glass, just do not hit it!

⇒ If you lack, don't talk negatively about someone else who has a need.

SCA: البيته من قزاز ما يجده الناس بالحجارة.

“He whose house is glass should not throw stones at people.”

English: People living in glass houses should not throw stones.

¹⁴⁹⁰ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi.

¹⁴⁹¹ From Muḥammad Ṣālih, Seleem 3; co-investigated with Hishām Bashīr. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 503. The similar ECA idiom is listed with proverb M22.3.

A22.7 ¹⁴⁹² *TINN Δᾶρ ΟΥΒᾶΡΤΕΩἘΡΚΙ ΕΣΚΙ ΜΟΥΡΤΙΜΕΝΙΛ, ΙΡΙΝ Δᾶρ ΟΩΩΙΓΙ ΜΟΥΡΤΙΝ.*

tinn daar ubarteweerki eski murtimenil, irin daar owwigi murtin.

tinn *daa=r* *ubarte=weer=gi* *eski* ...
 3SG:POSShome=LOC cooking.stone=INDF=ACC be.able
murti-men-il *iri=n* *daa=r* *owwi=gi* ...
 knot-NEG-PTC:IPF people=GEN house=LOC two=ACC
murti-n
 knot-3SG

In his home he who is not able to control one cooking stone, in another house he controls two.

ubarte Using two cooking stones instead of three is not enough, but only one stone is even worse.

murti usually means ‘to knot’, here ‘to control’.

⇒ While criticising others, he makes things even worse.

A22.8 ¹⁴⁹³ *ΔΕΣΚΙ ΤᾶΒΒΕΛΓΟΝ ΔΕΝCΙΡ ἈΝΙΝ, ΚᾶΤΡΕΓΙ ΤᾶΒΒΕΛΓΟΝ ΚᾶΤΡΕ ἈΝΙΝ.*

deski tabbelgon densir anin, katregi tabbelgon katre anin.

des=gi *tabber-el=gon* *densir* *an-in* ...
 fat=ACC touch-PTC:PF=CO fat.put.on INCH-3SG
katre=gi *tabber-el=gon* *katre* *an-in*
 wall=ACC touch-PTC:PF=CO wall INCH-3SG

While the one who touched the fat, becomes full of goodness; the one who touched the wall, he becomes a wall.

¹⁴⁹² From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 159); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza. His wife remembers a shortened version of the proverb without *weergi eski* and *owwigi*.

¹⁴⁹³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood. It is frequently said by women. Corresponding Mattokki proverbs with *katree* ‘wall’ can be found in semantic domains 21 ‘Personality and Character traits’ and 25 ‘Clothing’.

des denotes ‘something valuable’. It can be made from clarified butter (*isin*), however also from sesame etc.

katre denotes ‘something hard and dusty’.

⇒ If you are in good company (or work with good people) you will be good, if you are in bad company (or work with bad people) you will be bad.

⇒ If you marry a good wife/husband you will become good, if you marry a bad wife/husband you will become bad.

SCA:¹⁴⁹⁴ طيب الحديده و الضرب نصيب.

The good of the iron and the beating is the fate. – “Choose a good wife from a good family; having children is a matter of luck.”

English: Bad company corrupts good manners.

A22.9 ¹⁴⁹⁵ ΟΓΙΔΝ ΟΛΛΙ ΩΛΛΑ ΚΑΤΡΕΝ ΟΛΛΙ.

ogijn olli wala katren olli.

ogij=n olli wala katre=n olli
man=GEN shade and.not wall=GEN shade

A man’s shade rather than a wall’s shade.

wala (Ar. loanword) is a clause subordinator that is also part of the corresponding MSA proverb.

⇒ Getting married is in the best interest of an eligible woman, even if the prospective husband is not particularly good.

MSA: ظِلُّ راجل ولا ظِلُّ حيطَة – “A man’s shade and not a wall’s shade”

The encouragement to a man is expressed in A22.16.

¹⁴⁹⁴ SALWA AHMED 2005, proverb 222. The literal translation is my own. The second part of the SCA proverb does not have a correspondence in the Nubian proverb.

¹⁴⁹⁵ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wonders whether the proverb was taken from another culture and reflects recent developments in Nubian culture. The MSA idiom may support his theory.

A22.10 ¹⁴⁹⁶ ἈΡΜᾶΝΟΝ ΚΑΤΡΕ ΕΚΙΝ, ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΝΟΪΜΕΝ!

armaanon katre ekin, tokkon noosmen!

armaan=on katre e-ki-n tokkon ...

<name>=CO:COND wall be-COND-3SG IMP:NEG

noos-men

scratch-IMP:NEG

If Armaan is a wall, just do not scratch it!

⇒ There is no benefit in that person.

A22.11 ¹⁴⁹⁷ ἈΔΙΡΡΟ ΤΟΚΚΕ ΚΑΚΚΕΛ, ΒΑΓΟΝΔΟ ΜΙΝΒΙ ΔΟΥΛΙΝ.

adirro tokke kakkel, bagondo miinci duulin.

adir=ro tokke kakke-il ...

winter=LOC stay.next.to.sunny.wall get.warm-PTC:IPF

bagon=ro miinci duul-in

summer=LOC hunger gather-3SG

The one who gets warm by sitting next to a wall in sunshine in winter, gathers hunger in summer.

tokke When a farmer has been injured during winter time and is recovering, he prefers to stay near the courtyard wall warmed by the sun. However, as soon as he recovers he needs to return to his work. – Middle-aged Nubians from the Dongola Reach remember that in the past winters were colder. Even fires were lit when they sat together.

⇒ A farmer has to work hard in winter, even if it is cold outside, to ensure a good harvest.

⇒ Don't be lazy.

⇒ Read until you succeed.

¹⁴⁹⁶ From ḤAMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 160); co-investigated with Awād Ḥasan.

¹⁴⁹⁷ From ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Merowaarti East; co-investigated with Fawaz Muḥammad, Ḥamid Khabīr, Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

A22.12 ¹⁴⁹⁸ ΤΟΥΔΔΙ ΔΙΓΙ ΟΥΡΟΥΤΕ.*tuddi aygi urute.***tuddi** *ay=gi* *urute*

low.clay.wall 1SG=ACC blink

The low clay wall blinks at me.

tuddi

is a low clay wall that was specially built to prevent the fire from reaching the fodder. It is also a metaphor for anything that does not move or speak. By blinking without speaking a message can be sent.

⇒ Someone needs a favour that I find difficult to fulfil.

⇒ There probably is a problem.

A22.13 ¹⁴⁹⁹ Ἄ ΣΕΡἘ ἈΝΚΙΝ, ἈΓΓΑΡΕ ΔΙΓΡἹΓΙ ΣΟΚΚΕΝ.*aa seree ankin, angare digriigi sokken.**aa seree an-ki-n ...*

heart good INCH-COND-3SG

angare *digrii=gi* *sokker-n*

sleeping.bench many=ACC carry-3SG

When the heart becomes good, the sleeping bench carries many [people].

⇒ If the people are good, a crowded place is not a problem.

A22.14 ¹⁵⁰⁰ ΓΟῩ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕΝ ΚΟΣΙΡ*guu urummen kojir**guu urumme=n kojir*

groundblack=GEN peg

¹⁴⁹⁸ From ‘Abd al-İllah ‘Abd al-Rāziq, Magsasir Island; co-investigated with ‘Awad Ḥasan.

¹⁴⁹⁹ From Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Hamennaarti. *angare* can be replaced by *kaa* (house), *digrii* can be replaced by *kolod* (seven).

¹⁵⁰⁰ From ḤĀMİD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 125; and 2016: proverb 123); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

The peg of the dark ground

⇒ She is a mother-in-law who causes problems.

A22.15 ¹⁵⁰¹ *ΙΡΙ ΔΑΓΔΑΝ ΚΕΛΛΟ ΜΕΡΙΝ.*

iri jagadn keello merin.

iri jagad=n keel=ro mer-in

rope weak=GEN border=LOC cut-3SG

The rope tears at the place of weak[ness] / at the weakest place.

n keel forms a superlative. Cf. section 3.11.6.

⇒ Take care and find a solution before a vulnerability becomes a real problem.

⇒ Your weakest point in dealing with other people determines whether you are accepted or not.

⇒ When you speak make sure that everything is well-founded. Otherwise, the whole talk will not be accepted.

⇒ If a person lies once, the whole relationship is destroyed.

⇒ The weakest part of a religion determines whether it is good or not.

SCA: الحبل ينقطع محل رقيق. – “The rope will tear where it is thin.”

English: A chain is as strong as its weakest link.

A22.16 ¹⁵⁰² *ΙΡΙ ΙΒΙΡΤΙ ΤΕΝΔΙ ΒΕΛΚΙΝ, ΒΙΛΛΙΝ.*

iri ibirti tendi belkin, billin.

iri ibirti ten=di bel-ki-n billi-n

rope twist 3SG:POSS=ACC exit-COND-2SG pick.apart-3SG

When you take away the twist of his rope, it falls apart [loses its strength].

¹⁵⁰¹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 117; and 2016: proverb 115); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 481.

¹⁵⁰² From EL-SHAFĪE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

⇒ If the most important part is lost, all is lost.

A22.17 ¹⁵⁰³ *ΙΡΙ ΓΟΪΡ ΒΟΪΛΓΙ, ΤΕΝΝ ΕΪΪΕΡ ΔΙΓΙΡΙΝ.*

iri guur buulgi, tenn eyyer digirin.

iri guu=r buu-il=gi...

rope [gound=LOC lie-PTC:IPF]=ACC

tenn eyye=r digir-in

3SG:POSS neck=LOC tie-3SG

He ties the rope that lies on the ground around his neck.

iri guur A rope lying on the ground is unused.

⇒ His curiousness loads him with distant problems.

⇒ He bears responsibilities without being asked for.

A22.18 ¹⁵⁰⁴ *ΙΡΙ ΩΟΡΩΕΡΚΙ ΚΟΥΔΟΥΡΟ!*

iri shoorowerki kujuro!

iri shoro=weer=gi kujur-o

rope light=INDF=ACC put.on-IMP:POL:SG

Please, put on a light rope!

iri From the moment of marriage the husband is responsible for his wife and protects her. He is therefore less free than before.

irigi kujur also means ‘to write a marriage contract’.

iri digir denotes the marriage; lit. ‘a rope falls’.

⇒ Encouragement to a man to marry a woman.

⇒ Encouragement to a man to remarry his divorced wife because of the children which is possible in Islam.

The proverb can be said by a man or a woman. – The encouragement to a woman is expressed in A22.9.

¹⁵⁰³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁵⁰⁴ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 110; and 2016: proverb 108); co-investigated with the family of Maḥmūd Sa’īd, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, Rufā’i ‘Abd al-Laṭīf.

A22.19 ¹⁵⁰⁵ *ΜΟΥΡCIN ΙΡΙ ΟΥΡΤΙΝΑ.*

mursin iri urtina.

mursi=n iri urtina-n

lie=GEN rope short-COP

The rope of the lie is short.

⇒ One cannot keep up a lie for long. Eventually the truth will be revealed.

SCA: حبل الكذب قصير. – “The rope of lying is short.”

A22.20 ¹⁵⁰⁶ *ΙΡΙ CΕΡΕ*

iri seree

iri seree

rope good

the good rope

⇒ He is wanted by everyone, cannot refuse any request and has no time for himself.

A22.21 ¹⁵⁰⁷ *ΖΟΥΚΟΥΜΑΓΙ ΑΩΜΑΝ ΙΡΙΓΕΔ ΚΑΛΛΙΝ ΓΟΝ ΑΓΙΝ.*

hukuumagi ashman iriged kallin goon aagin.

hukuuma=gi ashma=n iri=ged kalli-n ...

government=ACC bast=GEN rope=INS push.away-3SG

goon aag-in

SUB stay-3SG

Although he pushes away the government with a rope of bast, he stays [on].

¹⁵⁰⁵ From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography. ‘Ali Ḥasan replaces *urtina* by *duurmunu* meaning ‘does not last’. The proverb has the same meaning as A20.10, M19.34, and M22.25, opposite meaning to A9.13. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 12; similarly ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 159.

¹⁵⁰⁶ From ḤAMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 172); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹⁵⁰⁷ From al-Amīn Muḥammad, Lebeb; co-investigated with Abāthīr ‘Abdullahi, Megdi ‘Ali, Kamal Hussein, ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

ashman iri is a weak rope, it never becomes strong.

kalli can also mean ‘to pay’. It symbolises someone who pays with something that does not last long, as a rope of bast can quickly be torn.

⇒ His actions have no effect.

⇒ He is a civil servant who is not doing his job. Neither the government nor the civilians have any benefit from him.

One research participant was reminded of the Sudanese Communist Party. Its members fought against many Sudanese governments, yet never came to power.

A22.22 ¹⁵⁰⁸ *ʔIBIP ʔYΛOYΓKI KŌN.*

shibir ulugki koon.

shibir *ulug=gi koor-n*

basket ear=ACC have-3SG

The [large] basket has an ear.

ulug means also the handle of a large basket.

⇒ His speech should take place in private but he can be heard by others.

⇒ Don’t reveal secrets or talk without scrutiny, for someone may be listening or spying on you while you are not paying attention.

variant *katre ulugki koon.*

The wall has an ear.

SCA: الحيطان ليخا أذان. – “Walls have ears.”

English: Walls have ears.

¹⁵⁰⁸ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; also uttered by Muḥammad Šāliḥ; variant from TAHA 2011. ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 146) begins with *ann shibir* meaning ‘my [large] basket’. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 71. The last interpretation is taken from there. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 398.

A22.23 ¹⁵⁰⁹ *ωΙΒΙΡ ΟΥΛΟΥΓ ΟΩΩΙΓΙ ΚΩΛ ΝΑΦΑΡ ΟΩΩΙ ΣΕΚΚΕΝ.*

shibir ulug owwi=gi kool nafar owwi sekken.

shibir ulug owwi=gi kool nafar owwi sokker-n
basket ear two=ACC having person two raise-3SG

The [large] basket having two ears [handles], two people raise it.

⇒ Working together is better than working individually.

SCA: القفة أم اذننين بشلو ها اتنين.

“The basket with two ears [handles] should be carried by two.”

A22.24 ¹⁵¹⁰ *ΓΆΛΟΝ ΑΤΤΙΡ ΒΟΥΝ ΓΟΟΝ, ΕΣΣΙΝ ΕΡΓΕΔ ΔΙΝ.*

gaalon attir buun goon, essin eerked diin.

gaalo=n attir buu-n goon ...

jar=GEN near lie-2SG SUB

essi=n eer=ged dii-n

water=GEN desire=INS die-2SG

Although you lie [are] near the large [water] jar, you die from thirst [desire of water].

⇒ You are lazy.

⇒ You have the opportunity to benefit from something, but you do not take advantage of it.

variant *gaalon jawwurro buun goon, essin eerked diin.*

Although you lie in the moist of the large [water] jar, you die from thirst.

¹⁵⁰⁹ From ‘Awad Hasan, Marraghah; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 127.

¹⁵¹⁰ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. Variant in www.iqraweb.net/حکم-وامثال-نوبية/ [last accessed on 17 August 2022] where orthography needs revision.

A22.25 ¹⁵¹¹ ἄφιλ, *ECCIN KEBEN.**aanyil, essin keben.**aany-il essi=n kebe-n*

live-PTC:IPF water=GEN pumpkin-COP

The one who lives is [like] a [cup from] pumpkin [full] of water.

kebe The water inside the *kebe* is always found to be moving or shaking.

⇒ I am surprised to see you unexpectedly after a long absence. It is fate.

⇒ He is moving around a lot, like the water in a pumpkin shell. That is why I am sure that you will meet him again.

A22.26 ¹⁵¹² ΟΓΙΣ ΤΕΝΝ ΚΟΥΒΕΓΙ ΤΑΓΙΡΙΝ.*ogij tenn kubegi tagirin.**ogij tenn kube=gi tagir-in*

man 3SG:POSS jug=ACC cover-3SG

The man covers his jug.

kube A jug made from earthenware.

⇒ He should marry one of his relatives.

SCA: اولى الزول يغطي ماعونة.

“It is better that the person covers his/her own pot.”

¹⁵¹¹ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; also in ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 1.

¹⁵¹² From TAHA 2011; with revised orthography. The proverb has the same meaning as A6.5. Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wonders whether the proverb reflects ancient Nubian culture and instead was later added from another culture. The Arab idiom may support his theory of a late incorporation into Nubian culture. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 175/179; with numbering inconsistent. Cf. ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 428.

A22.27 ¹⁵¹³ *TENN ΔΑΔΙ ΚΟΥΣ ΒΟΪΝ, ΕΒΕΛΙΝΔΙΓΙ ΤΑΓΙΡΙΝ.*

tenn daadi kus buun, eccelindigi tagirin.

tenn daadi kus buu-n ...

3SG:POSS vessel open STAT-3SG

eccel-i-ndi=gi tagir-in

other-PL-POSS=ACC cover-3SG

His vessel remains open, he covers what belongs to others.

⇒ He cares more for others than for his relatives.

⇒ He wants to marry outside of his kinship group. – He prefers a girl from another family to a girl from his own family.

variant *enn daadi wirij buul, tekkon irindigi tagirmen!*

... wirij ... ter=gon iri-ndi=gi tagir-men

... naked ... 3SG=CO people-POSS=ACC cover-IMP:NEG

Your vessel is naked; do not cover the one belonging to [other] people!

A22.28 ¹⁵¹⁴ *ΔΑΔΙ ΟΩΩΙΓΟΝ ΩΕΡΩΕΓΙ ΚΟΥΜΜΕΡΑΝ.*

daadi owwigoon werweegi kummeran.

daadi owwi=gon werwee=gi kumme-r-an

vessel two=CO one.another=ACC touch-NEUT-3PL

Two vessels touch each other.

⇒ They are relatives or good friends, yet quarrel.

A22.29 ¹⁵¹⁵ *ΤΟΥΛΛΑ ΒΟΔΚΙΝ, ΙΓ ΔΟΥΡΜΟΥΝ.*

tulla boodkin, iig duurmun.

tulla bood-ki-n iig duur-mun

smoke run-COND-3SG fire reach-NEG

¹⁵¹³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; variant from AHMAD SĀTI. The proverb has the same meaning as A22.1.

¹⁵¹⁴ From ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān, Irtide.

¹⁵¹⁵ From Muṣṭafa Samiltod, Agade; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. A9.13 and A9.34 have a very similar structure; A9.27 has a similar meaning.

When the smoke runs [spreads], the fire does not reach it.

⇒ When news get out, it cannot be stopped anymore.

A22.30 ¹⁵¹⁶ *ΚΑΨΨΙΝ ἸΓ ΔΟΥΓΡῪΜΟΥΝ.*

kashshin iig jugriimun.

kashshi=n iig jugrii-mun

dried.stalk=GEN fire hot-NEG

The fire of the dried stalks does not give heat.

⇒ If the foundation is bad, the outcome cannot be good.

A22.31 ¹⁵¹⁷ *ΚΑΨΨΙΓΓΙ ΚᾶΨΙΡΡᾶΝ, ἸΓ ΔῪΝ.*

kashshigi kaawirran, iig diin.

kashshi=gi kaaw-ir-r-an iig dii-n

dried.stalk=ACC gather-PL:OBJ-NEUT-3PL fire die-3SG

They collect the dried stalks; the fire goes out.

kashshi symbolises the energy fuelling a young man's life. A young man's life should not end suddenly, as the fire should not go out while the stalks (as indicated by the PL:OBJ suffix *-ir*) are collected.

⇒ Disaster has stricken us, as a young man has died suddenly.

⇒ People attempt to do something; however, it does not work.

⇒ Don't try to reach beyond your grasp!

⇒ He is a long-distance bus driver who drives too fast.

variant *kashshigi bittiran, iig duurmun.*

They gather the stalks; the fire does not last.

¹⁵¹⁶ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

¹⁵¹⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 43); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; variant from 'Abd al-'Aal Ṣadīq. Ḥāmid Khabīr regards this proverb as pre-Islamic without giving a reason for his assumption. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 141, is the same. The last interpretation is taken from there.

A22.32 ¹⁵¹⁸ *TENN ĪGIP TEKKI ΔΑΚΚΙΑΓΙ ΚΟΥΔΔΕ Δ̄ΓΙΝ.*

tenn iigir tekki jakkilgi kudde aagin.

tenn iig=ir ter=gi jakki-il=gi ...

3SG:POSS fire=LOC [3SG=ACC press-PTC:IPF]=ACC

kudde aag-in

get.burnt PROG-3SG

In his fire what he presses gets burnt.

⇒ If one interferes in another one's problem it becomes his own problem.

A22.33 ¹⁵¹⁹ *ΖΙΜΕΔ ΣΕΡΕΓΙΔ. ĪΓΚΙ ΤΕ ΕΡΡΙ ΝΑΛΛΑΝΔΕ?*

himed sereegid. iigki te erri nallande?

himed seree-gid ...

<name> good-NR

iig=gi te erri nal-r-an-re

fire=ACC Q:PRED take.from.to see-NEUT-3PL-Q:NEUT

Himed is a good man. Should they [indeed] take fire from [somewhere else] to see [him]?

erri Before matches became available fire had to be obtained from somewhere else and taken to the place where needed.

⇒ His goodness shines so bright that everyone recognises it.

A22.34 ¹⁵²⁰ *ĪΓ ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙΓΙ ΟΥΣΚΙΝ.*

iig uburtigi uskin.

iig uburti=gi uski-n

fire ash=ACC give.birth-3SG

¹⁵¹⁸ From 'Abd al-Bāšit Hāj, Shebatood.

¹⁵¹⁹ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with al-Amīn Muḥammad who places *te* after *erri* instead before; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein who replaces *=gi* by *=ged*.

¹⁵²⁰ From 'ABD AL-'AAL AḤMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Qādir Samiltod, Idrīs Aḥmad, Aḥmad Hamza. The proverb has the opposite meaning to A13.9.

The fire gives birth to [brings forth] the ash.

⇒ The father is good yet the son has become bad.

SCA:¹⁵²¹ . النار تلد الرماد. – “The fire gives birth to the ash.”

A22.35 ¹⁵²² ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙ ΤΩ̄ΥΡ ΤΩ̄Ν ΝΕΛΛΙ ΒΕΛΙΝ.

uburti tuur toon nelli belin.

uburti tuur toon nelli bel-in
ash inside from ember exit-3SG

Inside the ash the ember comes out.

⇒ A good person attracts a good one; an evil person attracts an evil one.

A22.36 ¹⁵²³ ΤΟΥΛΛΑΓΙ ΤΟΥΛΛΙΝ ΓΩ̄Ν, ΒΙΔᾶΚΟΝ.

tullagi tullin goon, bidaakon.

tulla=gi tulli-n goon bidaa-ko-n
smoke=ACC smoke-3SG SUB come-PRT1-3SG

While it [the fire] smoked the smoke, he came [to watch].

⇒ We do not have a problem with anyone, but evil just comes.

⇒ He turns up to start a fight.

variant *uduudegi aawin goon, bidaakon.*

While he was making thunder, he came.

A22.37 ¹⁵²⁴ ΕΡΟΝ ΖΑΛΛΑΡ ΤΩ̄Ν ΚΑΛΚΙΝ, ΕΝΝ ΒΑΛΕΡ ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓ ΔΟΥΚΚΙΝ.

eron hallar toon kalkin, enn baler turug dukkin.

¹⁵²¹ Similar to ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 125.

¹⁵²² From ‘Abd al-Hādi Mekki, Wad Nimeiri.

¹⁵²³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 124); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Hasan; variant from Aḥmad Hamza. *tulli* is rarely used, also missing in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965], and its pronunciation varies, alternatively *tulle*.

¹⁵²⁴ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

er=on halla=r toon kal-ki-n ...
 2SG=CO:COND pot=LOC from eat-COND-3SG
enn bale=r turug dukki-n
 2SG:POSS wedding=LOC wind start-3SG

If you eat from the pot, at your wedding the wind will start.

halla (Ar. loanword). Only poor people eat from a pot as they lack bowls. Also, “[t]he word pot metaphorically refers to the blood relationship.”¹⁵²⁵

turug Most wedding meals are taken outside. The wind may blow the sand lying around over the food and spoil the taste.

⇒ Said to shame the groom.

The proverb can be said in a literal sense when the wind increases at a wedding. It can also be said jokingly about a groom who is not poor.

A22.38 ¹⁵²⁶ *ΚΑΝΔΙ ΔΙΙΈΛ ΓΟΔΙΡΓΙ ΓΟΔΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kandi diyel gojirgi gojmunu.

kandi dii-el gojir=gi goj-munu
 knife dead-PTC:PF animal.for.slaughter=ACC slaughter-NEG

The knife that died [was not sharp] does not slaughter the animal for slaughter.

⇒ Get somebody qualified to do the job.

⇒ He did not prepare himself properly.

A knife used for slaughtering is also part of proverbs A9.35 and M9.27.

A22.39 ¹⁵²⁷ *TENN ΔΟΥΦΑΔΤΙ COYNΔΕΔΑΝΩΕ!*

tenn dufadti sundedanwe!

¹⁵²⁵ SALWA AHMED 2005: 201.

¹⁵²⁶ From ‘Abd al-İllah ‘Abd al-Rāziq, Magaasir Island; co-investigated with ‘Awađ Ḥasan.

¹⁵²⁷ From ḤAMİD KHABİR (2016: proverb 204); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein, ‘Awađ Ḥasan.

tenn dufad=gi sunde-ran-we
 3SG:POSS incense.vessel=ACC smell-INF-IMP:PL

Let (PL) us smell her incense vessel!

dufad Each woman is making her own perfume.

⇒ The workman should be the first to benefit from his work.

Someone had planted cover. When it had grown up a neighbour was the first one to pick from it. A man came along and said the proverb.

A22.40 ¹⁵²⁸ *INTIΛΛΕ ΕΚΚΟΝ ΜΙΝΕΛΛΕ? ΔΪΓΟΝ ΑΝΔΙΡ ΓΑΜΒΟΥ ΕΡΙ.*

intille ekkon minelle? aygon andir gambu eri.

intille er=gon minelle ...

needle 2SG=CO Q.what.is.it

ay=gon andi=r gambu e-r-i

1SG=CO 1SG:POSS=LOC axe be-NEUT-1SG

A needle – what are you? While I am – [like] an axe in my things.

⇒ Warning not to despise seemingly insignificant people. They can achieve something that others cannot.

⇒ Human beings perform tasks according to their abilities, just like a needle and an axe.

⇒ Everyone should work at his place.

variant *intille tenn hoobaadir gambun.*

A needle is [like] an axe in its function.

variant *intille tenn ubbur gambun.*

The needle its hole is [like] an axe [its hole].

English: A square peg in a round hole.

¹⁵²⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007: proverb 128; and 2016: proverb 126); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein; variants from EL-SHAFĪE EL-GUZUULI, Sayid Kunna, Khālid Ḥajj, and Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

A22.41 ¹⁵²⁹ Ἐωαγι κῶλ γαμβου δόμελ.

ewagi kool gambu jomel.

eewa=gi kool gambu jom-el
 fame=ACC having axe beat-PTC:PF

[He is] The famous one who chopped with an axe.

⇒ He does not fulfil his promises.

⇒ He shows off.

A22.42 ¹⁵³⁰ γαμβου ωιγιλλο τῶκιν, ἐρκον ἀδωῆρκι μερ!

gambu shigillo tookin, erkon aadweerki mer!

gambu shigil=ro toor-ki-n ...
 axe forest=LOC enter-COND-3SG
er=gon aad=weer=gi mer-∅

2SG=CO handle=INDF=ACC cut-IMP:SG

When the axe enters the forest, you cut a handle!

⇒ Someone's unlawful behaviour will be repeated by others.

⇒ If people do something together, everyone should get their share.

⇒ Citizens take from a government whatever they want.

⇒ He starts a fight.

A22.43 ¹⁵³¹ τᾶ, βαρρεγι βαρ βῶυλλο διγίριν.

taa, barregi bar buullo digirin.

taar barre=gi bar buu-il=ro ...
 come intervening.space=ACC choose STAT-PTC:IPF=LOC
digir-in
 fall-2SG

¹⁵²⁹ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. The proverb is an extended version of A21.1 and has the same meaning.

¹⁵³⁰ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 138); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁵³¹ From ‘Abd al-Raūf, Old Dongola; co-investigated with al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl, ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod and ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān; variant from ‘Abd al-Rahīm al-Ṭālib.

Come, you fall [settle] in the chosen intervening space.

⇒ You want to choose the good, but because it takes you so long, you end up having no choice.

⇒ After rejecting any marriageable girl because of being too tall, too small, too fat, too thin etc., you finally marry the one left over. She might be the ugliest.

variant *baril barrer digirin.*

He who chooses falls in the intervening space.

M22.1 ¹⁵³² *TENNA KĀ TŌȲP MĪLĀZGI BŌGĪRRIGI BI KALLI.*

tenna kaa tuur milaahgi boogirrigi bi kalli.

tenna kaa tuur milaah=gi ...

3SG:POSShouse inside stew=ACC

boog-ir-rigi bi kal-r-i

pour-TR-CO TAM eat-NEUT-1SG

Inside his house I will eat the stew that he pours [on the floor].

-rigi/-irgi *boogirrigi* is uninflected and therefore a converb. As it has a different subject than *kal*, it is a different-subject converb.

⇒ Her house is very clean.

⇒ The woman of the house is to be praised.

M22.2 ¹⁵³³ *ABOY ōĀōĒN ĀΔELGI ĀŌKŌKI, TENNA KĀGI BI AΛĒCOY.*

abu shaasheen aadelgi aawkooki, tenna kaagi bi alleesu.

abu shaasheen aadel=gi aaw-koo-ki ...

wealthy.man good=ACC make-PRT1-COND

tenna kaa=gi bi allee-s-u

3SG:POSS house=ACC TAM repair.LV-PRT2-3SG

¹⁵³² From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Asmaa A. Kenawy.

¹⁵³³ From 'Adīla Sulaymān, Dehemiit; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awad, 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim.

When the wealthy man made the good, he repaired his house.

abu shasheen is a partly Arabic expression designating a man who owns two (Ar. *-een*) thin cloths, one for the head as a turban and one for the chest as additional covering. By contrast, a poor man has only one cloth as a turban or none at all.

- ⇒ If a wealthy man cares for his family, they are proud of him.
- ⇒ If a wealthy man instead of being greedy does good deeds, his family also benefits.
- ⇒ If he were honourable, as he claims to be, he would care for his family.
- ⇒ A good person heeds advice.

M22.3 ¹⁵³⁴ *ENNA KĀTOY ΓAZĀZA EN GŌN, MINNAĪ ZŌLIGI KOYLOUGEN Ā SOMI?*

enna kaatu gazaaza en goon, minnay zooligi kulugen aa jomi?

enna kaa-tu gazaaza e-n goon ...

2SG:POSS house-EMPH glass be-3SG SUB

minnay zooli=gi kulu=ged aag jom-i

Q:CAUS people=ACC stone=INS PROG beat-2SG

Although your house is [made] of glass, why do you strike the people with the stone [throw a stone at the people]?

gazaaza (Ar. loanword) Glass was rarely used in pre-*hijra* Nubia.

- ⇒ Begin with your own faults before looking at those of others.

ECA: . إلهي بيته من إزاز ، ما يحدفش الناس بالطوب. – “If his house is from glass he should not throw bricks at the people.”

English: People living in glass houses should not throw stones.

¹⁵³⁴ From Ḥajja ‘Atiāt Ṣābr, Debood; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki. The most representative hotel in the Mattokki village of West Sehel is named similarly *anakatu*. The similar SCA idiom is listed with proverb A22.6.

M22.4 ¹⁵³⁵ *ΕΛΕΚΚΕΝ ΒΟΚΟΝ ΚΟΥΡΟΥΝ ΔΟΓΩΡ ἄΓΙ.*
elekken bokon surun dogoor aagi.
elekken bokon suru=na dogoor aag-i
 now SUB wall.bench=GEN above stay-3SG
 Until now he is sitting on the wall bench.

⇒ Time does not count for this person.

⇒ He is lazy.

M22.5 ¹⁵³⁶ *ωῶ, Ζαΐραν ἀγγελᾶρῆ!*
woo, hayran angaree!
woo hayra=na angaree
 INT deficiency=GEN sleeping.bench
 O, weak sleeping bench!

angaree Sleeping benches and beds were of varying quality and comfort.

⇒ I made a bad choice when marrying. But I will not take another wife.

M22.6 ¹⁵³⁷ *ΟΥΡΒΑΤΤΙ ΚΟΡΟΥ ΒΩΥΛ ΚΟΪΡ ΚΟΡΟΥ ΒΩΥΛΓ ἄ ΒΙΡΙΓΙ.*
urbatti korony buul kojir korony buulg aa birigi.
urbatti korony buu-il ...
 hole crooked STAT-PTC:IPF
kojir korony buu-il=gi aag birig-i
 [peg crooked STAT-PTC:IPF]=ACC PROG want-3SG
 The crooked hole wants a crooked peg.

urbatti is a variant of *urbid* in other proverbs.

⇒ An evil person attracts another evil person.

¹⁵³⁵ From St74; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi, Thābit Zāki.

¹⁵³⁶ From ‘Abd al-Şabūr Ḥāzim, Dakke and Heesa Island.

¹⁵³⁷ From St77; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

M22.7 ¹⁵³⁸ *ϖΙΒΙΡ ΟΥΛΟΥΓ ΟΩΩΙ ΚΟΛΓΙ, ΟΩΩΙ Ιᾶ ΙΝΔΙΡΑ.*

shibir ulug owwi koolgi, owwi yaa injira.

shibir *ulug owwi kool=gi ...*

basket ear two having=ACC

owwi aag inji-r-a

two PROG carry-NEUT-3PL

The [large] basket having two ears [handles], two [people] carry it.

⇒ Working together is better than working individually.

⇒ He is working hard on his own and is suffering. He should have a partner working with him.

M22.8 ¹⁵³⁹ *ΔΕΡΡΑΓΕΔ ΕCΣΙΓΙ ΚΑCΡΑ, ΤΕΝΔΕΡ ΒΑΡΡΑΔΙΡΟ ᾶ ΒΟΓΡΑ, ΒΕΨῚ ΚΙΝΝΑΓΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΓΟΝ Δᾶ.*

jerraged essigi kasra, tender barraadiro aa boogra, beeshee kinnagon duulgon daa.

jerra=ged *essi=gi kas-r-a ...*

jug=INS water=ACC draw.water-NEUT-3PL

ten=ro barraad=ro aag boog-r-a ...

3SG:POSS=LOC jar=LOC PROG run-NEUT-3PL

beeshee *kinna=gon duul=gon daa-Ø*

bucket small=CO big=CO be.present-3SG

They draw the water with the jug, from there it runs to its [large] jar, there is the small and the big bucket.

jerra is a small jug that is used to pour water into the larger *barraad*.

⇒ Everyone, the lowly and the high, is needed.

These days, jugs, jars and buckets are replaced by water flowing from a water tap in the house.

¹⁵³⁸ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Ali, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. I double-checked that *kool* is not preceded by the ACC clitic.

¹⁵³⁹ From Muḥammad Ajīb, Gurte; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān. Dunya ‘Abd al-Fataḥ heard it from her grandmother.

M22.9 ¹⁵⁴⁰ ΒΑΡΡΑΔ ΔΟΓΟΡ ΔΙΒΙΤΤΕ ΒΟῩ.

barraad dogoor dibitte buu.

barraad[=na] dogoor **dibitte** buu-Ø
jar[=GEN] above cup lie-3SG

Above the [large] jar lies the [small] cup.

⇒ Be wise in using your resources.

⇒ Everything is ready.

M22.10 ¹⁵⁴¹ ΒΑΡΡΑΔ ΔΟΓΟΡ ΔΙΒΙΤΤΕ ΔΑΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

barraad dogoor dibitte daamunu.

barraad[=na] dogoor **dibitte** daa-munu
jar[=GEN] above cup be.present-NEG

Above the [large] jar there is no [small] cup.

⇒ You have not finished your work.

M22.11 ¹⁵⁴² ΔΙΒΙΤΤΕ ΔΑ ΜΕΝΙΝ ΓΟΟΝ ΒΑΡΡΑΔΤΙ Δ̄ ΔΡΙ.

dibitte daa meenin goon, barraadti aa aari.

dibitte daa meen-in goon ...
cup be.present be.not-3SG SUB

barraad=gi aag aar-i
jar=ACC PROG take-3SG

Before the [small] cup is present, he takes [buys] the [large] jar.

dibitte ... barraad Without a small cup the large water jar is of no use.

⇒ He does tasks in the wrong order.

¹⁵⁴⁰ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ.

¹⁵⁴¹ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi.

¹⁵⁴² From 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Abd al-Qādir, Dehemiit, co-investigated with Khālid Kalos. Cf. A9.18, M9.3, M9.10, M9.11, M9.12, and M14.2.

M22.12 ¹⁵⁴³ ἸΝΔΙΓ ἄ ΚᾶωραΝ ΓᾠΝ, ἸΓ ΔΙῶCCOY.

iindig aa kaashran goon, iig diyossu.

iindi=gi aag kaashe-r-an goon ...

fuel=ACC PROG search-NEUT-3PL while

iig dii-os-s-u

fire die-PFV-PRT2-3SG

While they searched for the fuel, the fire died.

⇒ Disaster has stricken us, as a young man has died suddenly.

Note the difference between *diyossu* and *diyosu*. The first form states that the fire is completely extinguished, the second that the fire is almost extinguished and only embers remain. *-os-u* can be found in proverb M28.7.

M22.13 ¹⁵⁴⁴ ἸΓ ΚΙΥΙΡ ΓΟΥCOYTTI ΔᾶΜΝOY.

iig kinyir gusutti daamnu.

iig kinyir **gusutti** daa-munu

fire without smoke be.present-NEG

Without fire, there is no smoke.

kinyir is a variant of *kinyi* in other proverbs.

⇒ Everything has a cause.

ECA: مغيث دخان من غير نار. – “There is no smoke without fire.”

English: Where there is smoke there is fire.

M22.14 ¹⁵⁴⁵ ἸΓΝᾶ ΔOYΓPIP TĒΓΓI, OYBOYPTIP TŌN ἄ CARKI.

iigna jugrir teeggi, uburtir toon aa sarki.

¹⁵⁴³ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

¹⁵⁴⁴ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga.

¹⁵⁴⁵ From St26; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Muḥammad Gum‘a. The proverb has the same meaning as M13.1. Compare also A13.1.

iig=na jugri=ro teeg=gi ...

[fire=GEN hot=LOC stay]=ADV

uburti=ro toon aag sarki-Ø

ash=LOC from PROG be.afraid-2/3SG

After you/he stayed in the heat of the fire, you are / he is afraid of the ash.

⇒ After an accident someone fears even a little thing.

English: Once bitten, twice shy.

M22.15 ¹⁵⁴⁶ *COWWEΔΔIP ĪΓK ā OYΛΛIPa, ΔaWIPPO ΓaMBOYΓ ā OYNΔOYPPa.*

sowweddir iigk aa ullira, jawirro gambug aa undurra.

sowwi-ed-gir iig=gi aag ulli-r-a ...

get.dry-PFV-CAUS fire=ACC PROG light-NEUT-3PL

jawir=ro gambu=gi aag undur-r-a

moist=LOC axe=ACC PROG insert-NEUT-3PL

They light the fire by something dried [as wood], they insert the axe into the moist [wood].

sowwed ... jawir The first makes good fire, the second one not.

⇒ They cause more and more trouble with people.

⇒ He keeps talking without understanding the topic. He should stop.

⇒ In public he speaks well about someone else, however, in private he speaks negatively about the same person.

M22.16 ¹⁵⁴⁷ *OYBOYPTI ECCIF ā KOMBOΓIPMOYNOY.*

uburti essig aa kombogirmunu.

¹⁵⁴⁶ From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Muḥammad Jabāli.

¹⁵⁴⁷ From St62; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān. Muḥammad Şubḥi replaces *kombo* by *kudde* ‘to be pure, clear’. Cf. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 3.

uburti essi=gi aag kombo-gir-munu
 ash water=ACC PROG strong-CAUS-NEG
 The ash does not make the water strong/thick.

uburti Ash does not mix with water.

⇒ Unlawful gains do not last.

English: Ill-gotten gains

M22.17 ¹⁵⁴⁸ *ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙΓΙ ΙΝΔΙΛ ΤΕΝΝΑ ΟΥΡ ΔΟΓΟΡ ἄ ΒΟΓΙ.*

uburtigi injil tenna ur dogoor aa boogi.

uburti=gi inji-il ...

ash carry-PTC:IPF

tenna ur dogoor aag boog-i

3SG:POSShead above PROG pour-3SG

He who carries the ash, it scatters over his head.

⇒ If you want to solve a problem you will be affected by it.

⇒ He is causing many problems that make life difficult for him.

⇒ He [as a man] is looking into women's problems.

M22.18 ¹⁵⁴⁹ *ΕΚΚΕΔ ΣΑΛἄΜ ἈΝΙΝ ΓΟῶΝ, ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙΓΟΝ ΜΑΡῶΑΒΑ ἄ ἄΩΙ.*

esked salaam anin goon, uburtigon marhaba aa aawi.

esked salaam an-in goon ...

dust peace say-3SG SUB

uburti=gon marhaba=gi aag aaw-i

ash=CO welcome=ACC PROG make-3SG

When the dust says 'peace', also the ash makes a 'welcome'.

¹⁵⁴⁸ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Ali, 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim. When hearing it the last one became very happy as the proverb is considered ancient.

¹⁵⁴⁹ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Ali.

salaam (Ar. loanword) means ‘peace’ and is a formula of welcome.¹⁵⁵⁰
marhaba is another Arabic loanword meaning ‘welcome’.
 ⇒ Evil people agree.

M22.19 ¹⁵⁵¹ *ΕΚΚΕΔ ΔΕΓΓΟΥ ΜΕ? ΟΥΒΟΥΡΤΙΝ ΒΟΥΡΟΥΓΙ ΕΔΡΙ ΑΝΔΙΓΙ.*
asked degsu me? uburtin burugi edri andigi.

asked deg-s-u me ...

dust put.on-PRT2-3SG Q:NEG:FOC

uburti=na buru=gi ed-r-i an-rigi

ash=GEN daughter=ACC marry-NEUT-1SG become-CO

“Isn’t it that the dust dressed up?” “I marry the daughter of the ash.”

⇒ They are both bad.

⇒ A bad man marries a woman from a bad family.

⇒ Why did you work so hard? That was all for naught.

variant *uburti imbel buu. eskedna burugi edri andigi.*

The ash stands up. I marry the daughter of the dust.

M22.20 ¹⁵⁵² *TOTTIΓΕΔ ΔΙΛΛΕCΙ.*

tottiged jillesi.

totti=ged jille-s-i

sound=INS remember-PRT2-1SG

I remembered with the *totti* sound.

¹⁵⁵⁰ When visiting Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ’s monolingual mother in 2015 she was constantly wishing me “*salām*”. That concept was most important for her although no corresponding Nubian term existed. – Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (2023, p.c.) expresses ‘peace’ in Nubian by letting somebody know who much he is loved.

FERNEA and GERSTER’s 1973 title ‘Nubians in Egypt: Peaceful People’ fits well. Also Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2015, p.c.; Hāmid Khabīr 2020, p.c.

¹⁵⁵¹ From Sayid al-Ḥasan, Aneiba; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber; variant from Jamāl ‘Abdullahi. Thābit Zāki replaces *andigi* by *ya*.

¹⁵⁵² From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer.

totti is the sound of salt thrown into fire. It sounds like an explosion.
In this context it denotes a bad word.

⇒ You said something bad that I did not want to hear.

M22.21 ¹⁵⁵³ ጸላላገልገል ጥንና ጥገልገልገል ል ልገዕሃ.

hallagon tenna tagaddigon aa digu.

halla=gon *tenna* *tagaddi*=gon *aag dig-u*
pot=CO 3SG:POSS cover=CO PROG get.bound-3SG

The pot and its cover are bound together.

⇒ All are good or all are bad.

English: Bird's of a feather flock together.

M22.22 ¹⁵⁵⁴ ጭና ክሰብ ወላየክሰልል ቦህን ገዕን, ገህንልገል ል ጥገላሳ.

enna kisib waarkiddi buun goon, zoolindig aa tagiri.

enna kisib waar-kiddi buu-n goon ...
2SG:POSS earthen.bowl expose-CAUS STAT-2SG SUB
zooli-ndi=gi aag tagir-i
people-POSS=ACC PROG cover-2SG

-kiddi A CAUS suffix after a converb is otherwise undocumented, found neither in MASSENBACH (1933: §20.8), nor in the Andaandi data, nor in the variants. As Ramaḍān Muḥammad's language skills can be considered above average and he contributed most proverbs while others were around him, I take his data seriously. Although you cause your earthen bowl to be uncovered, you cover what belongs to other people.

⇒ He wants to marry outside of his relatives.

variant *anna kisib waar buun goon, kisib owwitig aa tagiri.*

Although my earthen bowl is exposed, I cover a second [another] earthen bowl.

¹⁵⁵³ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog. *-u* is unusual for 3SG.

¹⁵⁵⁴ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; variants from Muṣṭafa Rabī' and KHAYRIA MUSA. *kisib* is also used in M10.15.

variant *aleegi, tenna kisib waar buun goon, ademin kisibk aa tagiri.*
Indeed, although his earthen bowl is exposed, he covers the earthen bowl of [other] people.

M22.23 ¹⁵⁵⁵ *TENNA KICIB OΥΡΟΥΒ ΒΘŪN ΓŌN, TAGAΔΔIGEΔ Ā TAGIRI.*
tenna kisib urub buun goon, tagaddiged aa tagiri.

tenna kisib urub buu-n goon ...
3SG:POSS earthen.bowl have.hole STAT-3SG SUB
tagaddi=ged aag tagir-i
cover=INS PROG cover-3SG

Although his earthen bowl has a hole, he covers it with a cover [lid].

⇒ He offers a meal without meat.

⇒ He does stupid things that are of no use.

English: He shuts the stable door after the horse has bolted.

M22.24 ¹⁵⁵⁶ *TENNA ΦΟΥΚΚĒ ΟΥΡΟΥΒ ΒΘŪ.*
tenna fukkee urub buu.

tenna fukkee urub buu-n
3SG:POSS dough.bowl have.hole STAT-3SG
Her dough bowl has a hole.

⇒ She is a woman who does not organize her life and spends a lot of money.

M22.25 ¹⁵⁵⁷ *ΜΟΥΡCΙ TAGAΔΔI KΙΨΙΜA.*
mursi tagaddi kinyima.

mursi tagaddi kinyi-ma
lie cover without-COP

¹⁵⁵⁵ From St7; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muḥammad Şubḥi.

¹⁵⁵⁶ From Muḥammad Şubḥi.

¹⁵⁵⁷ From St10; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi. The proverb has the same meaning as M19.34, A20.10, and A22.19, opposite meaning to A9.13.

The lie is without cover.

⇒ A lie cannot be hidden. It will be revealed.

M22.26 ¹⁵⁵⁸ *ITTILLEG Ā NALLAN GŌN, GIR BAĞIDA OYCCOYGI İĀ NALMOYNOY.*

ittilleg aa nallan goon, gir bagid ussugi yaa nalmunu.

itille=gi aag nal-r-an goon ...

needle=ACC PROG see-NEUT-3PL SUB

gir bagid ussu=gi aag nal-munu

time part pole=ACC PROG see-NEG

Although they see the needle, sometimes they do not see the pole.

⇒ He does not always tell the truth.

⇒ Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?¹⁵⁵⁹

M22.27 ¹⁵⁶⁰ *AGAĞKI EL MĒNIN GŌN, ITTILLEN OYRPIDAKED BEL TĀCOY.*

agarki el meenin goon, ittillen urbidked bel taasu.

agar=gi el meen-in goon ...

place=ACC find be.not-3SG SUB

itille=na urbid=ged bel taar-s-u

needle=GEN hole=INS exit come-PRT2-3SG

Although he did not find a place, he came out from the hole [the size] of a needle.

⇒ He always finds a way out, even if he is put into jail.

¹⁵⁵⁸ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke.

¹⁵⁵⁹ As in the Holy Bible: New International Version; Matthew 7:3.

¹⁵⁶⁰ From Sha'bān Berber, West Sehel; co-investigated with Şabri Aḥmad. The Mattokki Sha'bān Berber uses *urbid*; Şabri Aḥmad replaces it by *ubbur*. Otherwise *ubbur* is a Andaandi lexeme.

M22.28 ¹⁵⁶¹ αἶ ἐκκ ἄ κᾶϞερι, Ϟιλιρ ιλλιλλεωἔρκ ἄ κᾶϞερι.

ay ekk aa kaasheri, siltir ittilleweerk aa kaasheri.

ay er=gi aag kaashe-r-i ...

1SG 2SG=ACCPROG search-NEUT-1SG

silti=ro ittille=weer=gi aag kaashe-r-i

chaff=LOC needle=INDF=ACC PROG search-NEUT-1SG

I search [for] you, [it is like] I search a needle in the chaff.

⇒ One can hardly find you.

English: a needle in a haystack

M22.29 ¹⁵⁶² ἔνν ἄγαρ ἐκκι ἰνδἰ βοῦμἰννα?

enn agar ekki inji buuminna?

enna agar er=gi inji buu-min-na

2SG:POSSplace 2SG=ACC carry STAT-NEG-Q:NEUT

Does your place not carry you?

⇒ Why do you always change your seat?

4.23. Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both

In ancient Nubia, there was a well-developed sense of ownership. Old documents precisely laid down ownership of agricultural land and sale of it.¹⁵⁶³ Wise men memorised who possessed what share of a date palm. Houses were of varying size, but within certain limits. There was gold.¹⁵⁶⁴ However, due to a greater amount of power sharing differences in wealth distribution were restricted, resulting in Nubian society being less hierarchical than the Arab one, except for age, wisdom or descent, as described in section 2.3.5.

¹⁵⁶¹ From ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm.

¹⁵⁶² From Fathī ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke. In Dehemiit *buuminna* is replaced by *buumna*.

¹⁵⁶³ RUFFINI 2012 describes land sales in medieval Nubia.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Nāsir al-Gum‘a’s sister 2017, p.c. Gold is still found in Nubia. Cf. semantic domain 27 ‘Materials’.

Before and in medieval Nubia ownership was rarely expressed in the form of money (*dungi/dugu*):

Beyond the Maks (customs houses) no money circulates; transactions are made by exchanging slaves, cattle, camels, iron tools and grain.¹⁵⁶⁵

Later, during the Funj Sultanate of Sennar (1504-1821) that at times included the Dongola Reach it is reported:

Travelers who entered the Funj kingdom ... were invariably impressed with the absence of coin currencies in the villages and regional markets. They found that the use of [money] was almost exclusively confined to those involved in the sultanic caravan trade to the outside world ...¹⁵⁶⁶

Further north, when the Italian Consul Bernardino Drovetti (1776 - 1852) wanted to visit the temple of Abu Simbel he failed due to Nubians not being convinced by monetary transactions:

He deposits 300 piastres. The villagers may clear the temple front [buried in sand] until he returns. When returning, nothing has been done. The Nubians tell him they have no use for 'money'.¹⁵⁶⁷

The German Egyptologist Heinrich Schäfer observed in Nubia in 1900 that "The land for house-building costs nothing here."¹⁵⁶⁸ Accordingly, archaeologists find a lack of coins in Lower Nubia in the Islamic period.¹⁵⁶⁹

An elderly Mattokki lady summarised life prior to the *hijra*: "Everything in Nubia was without payment."¹⁵⁷⁰ Similar in the Mahas region: "Paid labour

¹⁵⁶⁵ VANTINI 2009: 112.

¹⁵⁶⁶ SPAULDING 1985: 142.

¹⁵⁶⁷ HEIMLICH 2006: 161; in the German original: "Er hinterlegt 300 Piaster. Die Dörfler möchten bis zu seiner Rückkehr die Tempelfront freilegen. Als er zurückkehrt, ist nichts getan. Die Nubier erklären ihm, sie hätten keine Verwendung für 'Geld'."

¹⁵⁶⁸ GERTZEN 2014: 201; in the German original: "Das Land zum Häuserbau kostet hier nichts."

¹⁵⁶⁹ The British archaeologist David Edwards 2018, p.c.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Umm Ḥamdi 2000, p.c.

is not needed.”¹⁵⁷¹ In neighbouring Darfur “wage-labor was viewed as a shameful activity.”¹⁵⁷²

Elderly men from Lebeb remember that in their childhood ‘payment’ was by dates. Therefore, items produced outside Nubia were a rarity. In the mid-20th century only one family in Lebeb, descendants of the 19th century Sudanese ruler, the Mahdi Muḥammad Aḥmad, owned a refrigerator.¹⁵⁷³

When talking about poverty in an Alexandrian teahouse frequented by Nubians no Nubian lexeme for either ‘poverty’ or a ‘poor’ person was discovered, only the Arabic loanword *fegīir* in Mattokki, *fogir* in Andaandi. The men astonishingly asked themselves whether in the past when Nubians were living in Nubia there were no poor Nubians so that no word was required? However, there are different Nubian lexemes for ‘hunger’: *orgid*, *miinci* (Andaandi only), and *kalneer*.

In the Dongola Reach there was a general lack of possessions more than 100 years ago: “Poverty gnaws at them a lot, they are really very poor.”¹⁵⁷⁴ Still, begging in public is said to have been unknown; beggars in Dongola town are supposed to originate from non-Nubian Sudanese communities. This may be true as Nubian society shows a high degree of support by one’s kinship group and support of neighbours was pronounced, mitigating some of the results of poverty. When one’s animal destroyed another Nubian’s agriculture the compensation (*teej*) was not paid to the agriculture’s owner, but to somebody needy living in the village. The payment was in the form of dates or something similar; only later replaced by money.¹⁵⁷⁵

If someone had surpluses, especially agricultural produce, or a neighbour was in need, these were shared free of charge, with most of the items only being returned when the other had enough. There was reciprocity for items used for

¹⁵⁷¹ SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 74.

¹⁵⁷² NIELSEN 2008: 443.

¹⁵⁷³ Men from Lebeb 2015, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2020, p.c.

¹⁵⁷⁴ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1900: 16; in the German original: “Die Armut nagt sehr an ihnen, ja sie sind wirklich sehr arm.”

¹⁵⁷⁵ Abu Bakr Khayri 2019, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c. *teej* can also be a fine in a more general sense (Shafie El-Guzuuli 2022, p.c.).

bartering, such as sugar, crops, dates, and tea, but without a set time limit. When someone was sick, others worked the farm without payment. One Dongolawi recalls his grandfather while milking the cows being surrounded by a crowd of children. Each one of them received some fresh milk, not just his own. Even some of the homemade yogurt was passed on.¹⁵⁷⁶ Of course, I cannot check whether all that was said in order not to appear greedy.

This economic system worked when Nubians limited their desires and needs to a minimum, it was most probably highly environment-friendly. Elderly Nubians remember life in pre-*hijra* Nubia mostly positively, as they felt that their needs were met and communal solidarity made it easier for them to cope with life's challenges.¹⁵⁷⁷

The way the Nubian economy functioned is illustrated by the concept of *feza* where everybody assists in heavy communal work without being paid. Some examples of *feza* work are chipping of the earth, harvesting, cutting millet, threshing, building a house, roofing, repair work on the waterwheel, moving a waterwheel, and boat construction. When one Dongolawi building a well came across granite, he called a *feza*, and all the villagers joined in removing the granite. On Merowaarti Island in 2010 the whole village participated in the event of a boat launching, followed by the obligatory communal meal.¹⁵⁷⁸

Any Nubian in need of help may call a *feza* to receive communal support. He addresses two other Nubians who in turn search for further workmen, even inviting people passing by accidentally, and organise the work, calling:

¹⁵⁷⁶ Maher Habbob 2014, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017+2019, p.c.; Hāmid Khabīr 2019, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c. The Fadijja Nubian Am Gamal p.c.; in YASSER OSMAN 1990: 206. For non-bartering items that would indicate reciprocity without keeping precise accounting or expecting some roughly equivalent goods.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.; Hāmid Khabīr 2020, p.c.

¹⁵⁷⁸ The description of *feza* (in Sudanese Arabic *faza* ‘to come together to help s.o. in need’; TAMIS and PERSSON 2013: 50) is based mainly on the Dongolawi El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2015, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; Samira El-Melik-Ziadah 2018, p.c.; Hāmid Khabīr 2020, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.; also the Mattokki Shaikh Muḥammad 2014, p.c. MASSENBACH (1962: 117+118) has a somewhat older description of a *feza* by a Dongolawi.

From a Mahas perspective, the “faz’a” is explained in SANA AL-BATAL 1994: 53-54+64+78. Her article includes two *feza* working songs (pp. 89-92).

ΔΕΛΛΙΓΙ ΔΩΡΕΓΙ ΤΑΩΕ!

jelligi aawregi taawe!

Come (PL) in order to do the work!

Work load depends on age. During a *feza* workers may sing Nubian songs, partly with religious content. They are inspired by saying:

ΔΕΛΛΙΓΙ ΔΕΛΛΙΝ ΚΟΨ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕΓΙΡ,

ΔΕΛΛΙ ΤΙΡΤΙΝ ΚΟΨΓΙ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕΓΙΡΜΕΝΚΟ.

jelligi jellin kony urummegir,

jelli tirtin konygi urummegirmenko.

The face of the work causes the work to become black,
did the work not cause the owner of the work to become black?

In return, the one calling for a *feza* slaughters an animal, prepares a meal and millet beer (Ar. *marīsa*)¹⁵⁷⁹ to be consumed after the work has been finished.

In a similar strain of working together, Nubian weddings were and in some areas still are managed communally. Everyone is invited, joins in, becomes involved and celebrates. Hence, expenses occurred are less.¹⁵⁸⁰

The minimal circulation of money was reflected by a very low monetary dowry in comparison to Arabic culture. Besides the dowry, the groom presented the bride's family with different presents such as clothing, named *sheela*.¹⁵⁸¹ Some young Mattokki men in Alexandria even claimed that prior to the advent of Islam there had been no dowry.

A monetary economy slowly crept into the centre of the Funj Sultanate that increasingly enlarged the divide between rich and poor:

¹⁵⁷⁹ Before Nubians became influenced by workers returning from Saudi Arabia, only liquor was considered forbidden (*harām*), not beer.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Faḍl Aḥmad 2016, p.c. At a celebration in Urbi in 2019, I wondered who managed the tasks. The women answered that each one was the leader at her place. Each one seemed to be proud of her responsibility. Finally I was able to determine the woman in charge, however, she very much stayed in the background.

¹⁵⁸¹ Umm Ḥamdi 2001, p.c.

... the fundamental fault lay rather in the fact that the system of Islamic justice favored the literate, moneyed classes over the commoners.¹⁵⁸²

It created a greater dependency of the poor also in the Dongola Reach who might have to borrow from the rich to pay their dues:

... the imposition of land taxes in coin abruptly raised the threshold of what constituted “weakness” to a vastly higher level and bestowed upon those who did possess coinage a correspondingly irresistible leverage over those who did not. For example, where could one turn for help in paying taxes if natural disaster struck?¹⁵⁸³

The same went for Lower Nubia “because the few piasters they [the inhabitants of Abuhor] had left over they have to put aside for their tax.”¹⁵⁸⁴

Prior to the *hijra* Mattokki working outside of their villages sent home part of their wages, the same as Sudanese Nubians first moving to Egyptian cities and later to the Arabian Peninsula, thus enabling their relatives to buy more and more items that they previously could do without.

The compensation system during the *hijra* was based on a monetary economy, leaving the Nubians who had lived outside of such a system disadvantaged:

There was a compensation system of about thirty [to] fifty piasters per palm tree and a similarly symbolic amount per animal left behind. However, as part of a culture that relied little on money, they realized only too late how symbolic the amounts were.¹⁵⁸⁵

After the *hijra* the monetary economy entered Nubia, now surrounded by already more money-orientated *Ša’īdi* Egyptians, in its entirety as the Egyptian government had aimed for:

¹⁵⁸² SPAULDING 1985: 232-233.

¹⁵⁸³ SPAULDING 1985: 261.

¹⁵⁸⁴ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1900: 13; in the German original: “... denn die wenigen Piaster, die sie erübrigen, müssen sie für die Steuer zurücklegen.”

¹⁵⁸⁵ ALIA MOSSALLAM 2012: 181.

... the Nubian community were to be ‘improved’ in accordance with supposedly ‘rational’ development criteria, including the replacement of the barter with a monetary economy [after the *hijra*].¹⁵⁸⁶

Resettlement houses were built in such a way that their residents could maintain a high degree of independence, resulting in less sharing. Even water that had been in such an abundance prior to the *hijra* needed to be paid for.¹⁵⁸⁷

From the early 1980s, the Egyptian government improved relations with countries in the Arab Gulf. While it did not allow specific advertisements recruiting Nubians, job agencies managed to prioritise them. Their financial remittances and the income from tourism that Mattokki staying in Egypt had entered, strengthened the Nubian community financially.

In 2012 I went to visit a Mattokki friend in a village near Aswan and asked some children for the way. They requested money in return for the information. When hearing about that incident, it saddened my host. Shaming allows the Nubian community only to a certain extent to counteract these developments.

In the Sudan with its highly business-orientated government from 1989 until 2019 in which inhabitants from the Dongola Reach participated, and modern tools having reached Dongola, there is a similar development. Mechanizing of agriculture leads to a decrease of calling for a *feza*. Whereas harvesting as a *feza* was nearly free of charge, one mechanical harvester substituting the many Nubians that worked together requires payment.¹⁵⁸⁸

The Nubian perception of finances and the desires and values related to it have changed. Financial security is increasingly trusted more than societal security provided by relatives and tight-knit village communities willing to share, and replaced by individualistic strains. Many parents’ main objective in raising their children has become maximizing their future job prospects. Young Nubians suddenly get the opportunity of spending more money than

¹⁵⁸⁶ GILMORE 2016: 23.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Aḥmad ‘Uthmān 2013, p.c.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. The last *feza* Hāmid Khabīr remembers to have occurred in his home village Khannaag was in about 2005, although when staying there in 2023 I heard about a *feza* to help a farmer with his *foul* harvest.

their parents ever did. The financial status of the prospective groom becomes most important. In some villages working individually is preferred to working as a community, where one of the first questions is: Who is the manager? One Dongolawi remembers that during a more recent visit he was asked to pay for the butcher's services with cash instead of goods in kind.¹⁵⁸⁹

A similar development can also be observed in other parts of the Sudan:

[In Darfur] There was reluctance to join the emerging monetized system. Eventually, however, money became the most efficient exchange commodity and quickly replaced the 'beerparty' as the dominant form of labor mobilization (Barth, 1988).¹⁵⁹⁰

By contrast, in their Friday prayers religious-minded Nubians are reminded that there will be a day of judgement (Ar. loanword *nahar*) when God will assess everyone not by their possessions, but how they have lived. Also, I as a researcher, should not become sentimental about the former Nubian economy. Would the fulfillment of the basic needs of daily life be sufficient for me?

¹⁵⁸⁹ 'Abdu al-Sunni 2016, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.; the Mattokki Nubian social entrepreneur May GahAllah 2018, p.c.; also others. 'Aisha' in ISMAIL and MAKKI 1990: 122. Cf. proverbs A10.8 and A23.6; and subchapter 5.6.

In 2014 I met a young unemployed Mattokki whose close relative was building a house. I asked the young man why he would not work at his close relative's house. He answered that that would be unpaid work. He did not consider that in future he may need his relative's support.

The southern Sudanese 'Helen' in ISMAIL and MAKKI (1990: 151) speaks of Sudanese women's experiences: "People with little or enough money behave decently. You can respect them. But, when they suddenly get a high position ... you see a completely different person. ... even the gifts they have received from God are misused by them. They develop a character they didn't have before." – In the German original: "Leute mit wenig oder ausreichend Geld haben ein anständiges Benehmen. Man kann sie respektieren. Aber, wenn sie plötzlich eine hohe Stellung ... bekommen, dann sieht man einen ganz anderen Menschen. ... sogar die Gaben, die sie von Gott bekommen haben, werden von ihnen mißbraucht. Sie entwickeln einen Charakter, den sie vorher nicht hatten."

¹⁵⁹⁰ NIELSEN 2008: 443. With 'beerparty' Nielsen and Barth mean the *feza*.

This semantic domain includes proverbs dealing with slaves (male: *nugud*/female: *nogo*). There is no disgust or moral questioning about having slaves. They were considered the property of their owners, a phenomenon also occurring in Nubia, however to a much lesser degree.¹⁵⁹¹

The slave was a member of the family.¹⁵⁹²

The descendants of former slaves ... enjoyed full and equal status on the part of the Nubians, sharing all rights and obligations with them. They received full recognition as persons and complete integration into the local community.¹⁵⁹³

Nubians rarely talk about the slave trade in spite of having lived along one of its main routes from the interior of Africa to the Mediterranean. Some Nubians were even involved in the slave trade and its atrocities:

The most prominent and wealthy slave raider in the northern Shilluk region was Muḥammad Khayr. A Nubian from Dongola by birth, ... During the fall of 1860 Muḥammad Khayr gathered five hundred Nubians and Arabs and sponsored a slave raid that brought in 1500 slaves and 7000 head of cattle.¹⁵⁹⁴

During their hazardous journeys some of the slaves remained in the Nile Nubian villages. That is why some Nubians owned slaves:

¹⁵⁹¹ TROUTT POWELL (2013: 28) describes the late 19th century Sudan where almost every household could own at least one [slave]. Also, the Western Sudanese proverbs of SALWA AHMED 2005 (see proverbs 718 and following) discuss slaves literally more frequently than the Andaandi ones.

¹⁵⁹² MASSENBACH 1931: 201; in the German original: “Der Sklave war ein Glied der Familie.”

¹⁵⁹³ HOHENWART-GERLACHSTEIN 1979, 30; in the German original: “[D]ie Nachkommen einstiger Sklaven ... genossen von seiten [sic!] der Nubier volle Gleichberechtigung und teilten mit ihnen sämtliche Rechte und Pflichten. Sie fanden volle Anerkennung ihrer Persönlichkeit und absolute Eingliederung in die Ortsgemeinschaft.”

¹⁵⁹⁴ BESWICK 2014: 131. Also JOHNSON 2000: 78: [the Nuer Prophet Ngundeng Bong, who died in 1906] “complained of ‘Dungela’ (Danaqla) who cut off people’s hands.”

In 1904-05 there were about 20,517 slaves in Dongola Province, over 15 percent of the population. ... these figures represent a significant decline from the nineteenth century, ... but they do underscore the role of slavery and the slave trade in shaping the ethnic makeup of northern Sudanese society.¹⁵⁹⁵

Their state improved:

The slave caravans left behind the sick, placing them under the village tree. The villagers, also from neighbouring villages, and among them especially the village prayer leaders, *imāms*, were concerned and cared for them. After the slaves' recovery they became part of the village and received the three vertical facial scars (Ar. *shulūkh*) [on each cheek] signifying a member of the Andaandi group. While descent from a slave was remembered, they were not necessarily considered slaves anymore. Some female slaves were even married. If one's mother did not breast-feed, a female slave became a surrogate mother in the Islamic sense. In later life the children treated the surrogate mother the same way as the biological mother. As well as mother and maternal aunt, at one's wedding the surrogate mother may put henna on the groom.¹⁵⁹⁶

Slaves were involved in agriculture and performed wedding songs, still before 1950,¹⁵⁹⁷ which means that during British colonial rule some people in the Dongola Reach were considered as slaves, even if officially not permitted.

Some Mattokki are also claimed to be descendants of slaves, especially in the villages of Seyaale, Maharraga, Gurte 3 and Dakke. Since the 20th century in these villages some larger farms had been needing extra workers. They also cut trees, and worked as water carriers. They were considered to be very skillful at manual work, such as making Nubian sleeping benches, leather products and processing iron. They were respected; other Nubians drank and

¹⁵⁹⁵ AHMAD A. SIKAINGA 2011: 14; based on documents of the former British colonial administration.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. talking about his youth.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Fādi Ibrāhīm 2023, p.c.; Aḥmad 'Ali 2024, p.c. The date is from 'Abd al-Raḥīm Shāhīn 2011, p.c. He was born in 1963 and passed away in 2017.

ate with them. However, there are still differences. One Mattokki would not allow his daughter to marry any villager who descended from South Sudan, Ethiopia or West Africa. He also considers goat's milk comparable to milk breast-fed by one of these women.¹⁵⁹⁸

In the same vein, even stronger, the writings of the Egyptian Nubian novelist Haggag Hassan Oddoul are interpreted:

Oddoul has shed light on the rigid class system and the social stratification in the Nubian villages, which make[s] ... ex-slaves, 'socially humiliated and sexually vulnerable'.¹⁵⁹⁹

Outside influence may have increased this kind of racism, explaining the differences between older and more recent sources.

A23.1 ¹⁶⁰⁰ *ΩΕΛΓΙ ΤΙΡΤΙΓΕΔ ΑΒΒΙΡῚΡΑΝ.*

welgi tirtiged abbireeran.

wel=gi tirti=ged abbiree-r-an

dog=ACC owner=INS measure.LV-NEUT-3PL

They measure the dog with [according to] its owner.

- ⇒ The offspring of a good person are considered as good; those of an evil person are considered evil.
- ⇒ The offspring of a respected person are also shown respect.
- ⇒ An ill-mannered child is forgiven because of its parents' good reputation.

A23.2 ¹⁶⁰¹ *ΤΙΡΤΙ ΚΙΨΨΙ*

tirti kinynyi

¹⁵⁹⁸ Mattokki men from Dehemiit, Dakke and Seyaale 2014+2020+2022, p.c.

¹⁵⁹⁹ GHADA ABDEL HAFEEZ 2019, 177. While Nubians in general adhere to the concept of *sutera*, Oddoul does not show such restraint.

¹⁶⁰⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 78; and 2016: proverb 77); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹⁶⁰¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 13); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, 'Abdullahi 'Uthmān.

tirti kinynyi

owner without

without owner

- ⇒ He does not have manners.
 ⇒ He is without family / an illegitimate child.
 ⇒ Nobody is responsible for him. (meant as an insult)

The proverb is not used for orphans as they are respected.

A23.3 ¹⁶⁰² *NŌPTIGI KŌΛ ĪΓKI MICIPMOYN.*

noortigi kool iigki misirmun.

noorti=gi kool iig=gi misir-mun

flour=ACC having fire=ACC overlook-NEG

The one who has flour does not overlook [miss] the fire.

iig Fire is needed to bake bread from flour.

- ⇒ The one who has the basic necessities of life will not ignore other less important things.

English: Look after the pence [small coins], and the pounds will look after themselves.

A23.4 ¹⁶⁰³ *NIŪŪI KIΨΨI NIŪŪIGI KŌΛNAP ĀPIN NAZĀPKI.*

nishshi kinynyi nishshigi koolnar aarin nahaarki.

nishshi kinynyi ...

horn without

nishshi=gi kool=nar aar-in nahaar=gi

horn=ACC with=AD take-3SG day=ADV

One without horn takes along one with horn on the day.

¹⁶⁰² From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 94; and 2016: proverb 93); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Aḥmad Sāti, Hishām Bashīr. The first two replace *noorti* by the synonym *kanisse*. The last one drops the ACC clitic =*gi*. The proverb has the same meaning as A18.3.

¹⁶⁰³ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 91); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad, Mu‘amr al-Fīl, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Nemat Abdalrahman.

nishshi kinynyi denotes someone weak/poor who cannot defend himself.

nishshigi kool denotes someone strong/influential/powerful/wealthy who can impose himself on others.

nahar denotes the day of judgement, which any faithful Muslim or Christian is expecting to come.

⇒ On the day of judgement, everyone, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the powerless, will be treated equally and receive justice against arbitrariness.

⇒ On the day of judgement the powerless person is with God.

In Nubia power is symbolised similarly as in the Old Testament.¹⁶⁰⁴ In medieval Nubia “[o]ne of the insignia of the Eparch of Nobadia was a helmet surmounted with two horns (or several pairs of horns).”¹⁶⁰⁵ It can even represent God (Allah) who is the strongest one of all. In Andaandi, the day of judgement is called *Artin ogol teebirann guu* ‘time of standing before God’.

The proverb is said when justice seems to be lacking and one wonders when retribution will be made and one will get one’s rights.

A23.5 ¹⁶⁰⁶ *ĪN KIƆƆI*

iin kinynyi

iin kinynyi

right without

without right [hand]

⇒ He has neither good behaviour nor morals.

A23.6 ¹⁶⁰⁷ *BŌYŪN ΔĪΛI*

buun diili

¹⁶⁰⁴ HARRIS et al 1980: “In the O[ld] T[estament] the horn is ... a ... term for power.”

¹⁶⁰⁵ VANTINI 2009: 67.

¹⁶⁰⁶ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 12); co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti.

¹⁶⁰⁷ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 22); co-investigated with Sāmi ‘Abdallah

buun=*n* *dii-il-i*
 abundance=GEN die-PTC:IPF-PL
 the abundance of those who die

⇒ He is mortal, yet mean/greedy and does not share his riches.

A23.7 ¹⁶⁰⁸ *ΦΟΓΙΡ ΙΡΔΕ̄Ν ΒΑCΙΛΟΥ.*

fogir irjeen basilu.

fogir irjeen=*n* *basil-un*
 poor rich=GEN food.for.journey-COP

The poor is the food for the journey of the rich.

⇒ A poor person does not have a safe place in society, as a wealthy person can exploit him at will.

A23.8 ¹⁶⁰⁹ *ΦΟΓΙΡ ΙΡΔΕ̄Ν ΔΗΜΟΥΝ.*

fogir irjeen anmun.

fogir irjeen=*n* *an-mun*
 poor rich=GEN become-NEG

The poor does not become rich.

⇒ The goodness/benefit does not go with that person.

A23.9 ¹⁶¹⁰ *ΕΡΟΝ ΓΑCΟΥΩΕ̄ΡΚΙ ΔΟΛΚΙΝ, ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΦΟΓΙΡ ΙΡΔΕ̄Ν
 ΔΝΕΛΝΑΡ ΔΟ̄ΥΜΕΝ, ΙΡΔΕ̄Ν ΕΚΟΛΝΑΡ ΔΟ̄Υ!*

*eron gasuweerki dolkin, tokkon fogir irjeen anelnar juumen,
 irjeen ekolnar juu!*

¹⁶⁰⁸ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 68; and 2016: proverb 67); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

¹⁶⁰⁹ From female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān, Imaani.

¹⁶¹⁰ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 183); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli. Hāmid Khabīr received the proverb from Yāsīn Ḥisēn (Surtood).

er=on *gasu=weer=gi* *dol-ki-n* ...
 2SG=CO:COND thing=INDF=ACC love-COND-3SG
tokkon fogir irjeen *an-el=nar* *juur-men* ...
 IMP:NEG poor rich INCH-PTC:PF=AD go-IMP:NEG
irjeen *e-ko-el=nar* *juur-Ø*
 rich be-PRT1-PTC:PF=AD go-IMP:SG

If you need something, just do not go to one who was poor and became rich, go to the one who has always been rich!

⇒ A formerly poor person never forgets that once he was poor. He is afraid of becoming poor again and therefore does not share.

A23.10 ¹⁶¹¹ *ΦΟΓΙΡΚΟΝΟΝ ΔΑΚΙΚΙΔΙΡ Δᾶ ΒΟΥΡΑΝΝ ΔΟΓΟΡ,*
ΙΡΘΕΝΓΟΝΟΝ ΡΑΓΑΒΑΡ Δᾶ ΒΟΥΡΑΝ ΓΕΝΟΥΝ.
fogirkonon asikkiidir daa buurrann dogoor,
irjeengonon ragabar daa buuran genun.

fogir=gonon *asikki-iid=ir* *daa* ...
 [poor=COM borrow-NR=LOC be.present
buu-r-an=n *dogoor* *irjeen=gonon* ...
 STAT-NEUT-3PL]=GEN COMP rich=COM
ragaba=r *daa* *buu-r-an* *gen-un*
 kill.NR=LOC be.present STAT-NEUT-3PL better-COP

It is better that the rich are present in the killing than the poor present in the borrowing.

fogir ... *irjeen* The proverb is based on Islamic law where a murderer has to pay a ransom. A wealthy person is more likely to pay the ransom than a poor person to return what he borrowed.

ragaba is a Sud. Arabic loanword with two meanings: ‘neck’ and ‘to kill’.

ragabar daa buun is abusive, denoting somebody who is not good.

¹⁶¹¹ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 226); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein. Hāmid Khabīr received the proverb from Yāsīn Ḥisēn (Surtood).

- ⇒ From a wealthy person you will receive the payment, even if it is blood money.
- ⇒ Instead of borrowing from a poor person, it is better to stay within one's means.

A23.11 ¹⁶¹² *ΜΑΓΑΚΙ ΤΕΝΝ ΑΓΑΡΝ ΒΟΚΚΟΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝ.*

magaski tenn agarn bokkon tigran.

magas=gi tenn agar=n bokkon tig-r-an
 thief=ACC 3SG:POSS place=GEN SUB trace-NEUT-3PL

They trace the thief until his place.

bokkon In contrast to Mattokki, in Andaandi the *k* is geminated.

- ⇒ No one gets away unpunished.

A23.12 ¹⁶¹³ *ΝΟΥΓΟΥΔΤΙ ΓΑΛΛΕΚΑΝ, ΚΟΥΤΤΕ ΖΩΚΚΙ ΒΙΤΤΙΝ.*

nugudti galleekan kutte hoossi bittin.

nugud=gi gallee-ki-an ...
 slave=ACC praise-COND-3PL
kutte hoossi bitti-n
 descend animal.dung pick.up-3SG

When they praise the slave, he descends and picks up the animal dung.

gallee ‘to praise’ is derived from Arabic *ghāli* ‘expensive.

- ⇒ When praising oneself or someone else more than necessary, that person will become arrogant.

One proverb listed in a former semantic domain would also fit here:

A9.4 *nogo gaaligi kamir kujurran gaal, kutte obegi tubkon.*

After they put the expensive female slave on a camel, she descended and swept the dung.

¹⁶¹² From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti. ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod replaces *agar* by *kaa* meaning ‘house’.

¹⁶¹³ From ‘Ali Ḥasan, Khandaq, and Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Bashīr ‘Abdallah, El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

M23.1 ¹⁶¹⁴ *INΔI MĒNIA, BI INΔI ā ΔANNOCNA?*

indi meenil, bi indi aa annosna?

indi *meenil* ...

2PL:POSS except

bi **indi** *aag* **anna-os-na**

TAM 2PL:POSS PROG 1SG:POSS-PFV-Q:NEUT

Except what belongs to you, will mine [ever] belong to you?

St. transl.: The thing you do not own does not wake you up.

⇒ You have not returned what you have borrowed.

⇒ You are disappointed because you received less than you expected.

⇒ Don't expect support from anybody except from your relations.

This is a rhetorical question, mainly used by women.

M23.2 ¹⁶¹⁵ *ENΔI MĒNIA, ā ENΔAMOYN.*

endi meenil, aa endamun.

endi *meenil* *aag* **endi-mun**

2SG:POSS except PROG 2SG:POSS-NEG

Except what is yours, it is not yours.

⇒ You should obey an elderly relative's command.

⇒ Only a relative will help you always. Someone outside of one's kinship group only helps to a limited extent.

M23.3 ¹⁶¹⁶ *KOYBKI KŌΛ, MALTIPI ΔŌY ā EΔKI.*

kubki kool, maltir juu aa edki.

¹⁶¹⁴ From St6; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz, Muḥammad Şubḥi, 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ, Khālīd Karār, Fawzi Ṭāhir, Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid. In spoken Mattokki the last two words are combined to [*a:nnosna/ya:nnosna*].

¹⁶¹⁵ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁶¹⁶ From Sayid al-Ḥasan, Aniiba; *edki* is a variant of *ekki*.

kub=gi kool mali=ro juur aag edki-Ø
 boat=ACC having east=LOC go PROG urinate-3SG

The one who owns a boat goes to the east to urinate.

⇒ He who has money and possessions can do whatever he likes.

M23.4 ¹⁶¹⁷ ΔΟΥΓΟΥ ΔΟΥΓΟΥΝ ΔΟΓ̄ΟΡ̄ ᾹΓΙ.

dugu dugun dogoor aagi.

dugu dugu=na dogoo=ro aag-in
 money money=GEN top=LOC stay-3SG

Money stays on top of money.

St. transl.: The money knows its turn.

⇒ The one who has money will become even richer.

variant *dugu dugun agark aa kaashe.*

Money looks for the place of money.

variant *dugu dogoor aa kaashe.*

Money searches for more.

variant *dugu tenna tirtiigi yaa kaashe.*

Money searches its owner.

ECA: .حط القرش على القرش. – “Put the piaster on the piaster.”

M23.5 ¹⁶¹⁸ ΓΙΡΙΩ ΑΡΟ ῙΟΜ ΟΥΡΟΥΜΜΕΡ̄ Ᾱ ΝΕΦ̄Ε̄.

girish aro yoom urummer aa nefee.

girish aro yoom urumme=ro aag nefee-Ø
 piaster white day black=LOC PROG benefit.LV-3SG

The white piaster benefits on the black day.

¹⁶¹⁷ From St24; variants from Fatḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Muḥammad and Thābit Zāki. The ECA idiom is related in form, however, its meaning “be economic” is slightly different.

¹⁶¹⁸ From al-Hajj ‘Awaḍ ‘Ali, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

girish is the smallest Egyptian currency denomination. Here it denotes any amount of money, not just a small amount.

⇒ Someone with sufficient money has the ability to solve one's problems.

This proverb has been translated from Egyptian Colloquial Arabic reflecting its other-cultural influence:

ECA: القرش الأبيض ينفع في اليوم الأسود.
 “The white piaster is useful on the black day.”

M23.6 ¹⁶¹⁹ αΓΟΣ ΩΕΡ ΑΜΑΔΕ ΒΟΥΛ ΩΕΡ ΔΙΓΙΡCOY.

agos weer amaajee buul weer digirsu.

agos *weer amaajee buu-il* *weer digir-s-u*
 poor one girth STAT-PTC:IPF one bind-PRT2-3SG
 The poor one binds [asks] the one girthed [with a belt only].

amaajee In the past, poor Nubians were clothed around the loins only.

⇒ You ask someone to support you who has less than yourself.

⇒ What can a poor person take from another poor person?

M23.7 ¹⁶²⁰ ΕΡ ΜΕΚΚΙ ΤΙΡΑ? ΜΙΝΔΙΛΙΜΑ? ΕΝΝΑΪ ΜΙΝΔΙΛ ΓΑΛΙΛΜΑ.

er meekki tira? mindiilima? ennay mindiil galiilma.

er meekki tir-a *mindiil-i-ma ...*
 2SG Q:ACC give2/3-3PL handkerchief-PL-COP

er=nay mindiil galiil-ma
 2SG=AD handkerchief little-COP

What do they give? Handkerchiefs? With you a handkerchief is little.

mindiil ... galiil are both Arabic loanwords. Nubian women are said to express their desires very directly, especially with someone who

¹⁶¹⁹ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Muḥarrām Maḥmūd.

¹⁶²⁰ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with Faḍl Aḥmad.

supposedly owns more than them. Nowadays, a girl expects her fiancé to give her larger presents than prior to the *hijra*. Therefore, the utterance may be of later origin and became a proverb when the Mattokki artist Şidqi Aḥmad used it.

⇒ I had expected you to give me more.

M23.8 ¹⁶²¹ *ΝΟΥΓΟΥΔ ΙΨΙΡΙΝΓΙ, ΤΕΝΝΑ ΤΙΡΤΙ ἄ ΔΟΡΙ.*

nugud iiwiringi, tenna tirtii aa joori.

nugud *iiw-ir-in=gi* ...

[slave irrigate-PL:OBJ-3SG]=ADV

tenna tirtii aag joor-i

3SG:POSS owner PROG harvest-3SG

What the slave irrigates, his owner harvests.

⇒ In great trouble, do not talk with a person of low position, talk with the one who has responsibility.

English: Speak to the organ-grinder, not the monkey.

M23.9 ¹⁶²² *ΝΟΓΟ ΩΕΡ ἄ ΔΕΛΛΙ ΓΕΛΙΛΙΓΓΑ, ΩἄEngspĒΓ ἄ ΒΑΪCOY.*

nogo weer aa jelli geliilinga, shaareeg aa baysu.

nogo *weer aag jelli geliil-inga* ...

female.slave one PROG work little-COND

shaaree=gi aag bay-s-u

dusk=ACC PROG ask.God-PRT2-3SG

As one female slave [wants to] work a little [only], she asks God for the late afternoon.

⇒ He wants time to pass quickly.

¹⁶²¹ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad ‘Ali.

¹⁶²² From Muḥammad ‘Abdallah, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

4.24. Food Preparation and Meals

Here I continue the discussion of semantic domain 6 ‘Agriculture: Harvesting, Milling and Storing’. Especially at weddings, funerals, and feast days of Muslim saints (Ar. *mūlid*), preparing and eating food (*kal/kalti/kalee*) are communal events, knitting the village community closely together.

One kind of meal is the shared meal of generosity (Ar. loanword *karaama*). Occasions for a *karaama* were requests for a good harvest, or God’s mercy during an affliction or emergency situation (*bela*; Ar. *bela'*), as a high Nile flood. There are people who have *karaama* and can pronounce blessings (Ar. *baraka*) and mercy on fellow human beings. Mainly among the Mattokki before increasing Islamisation meals in honour of such a Sufi saint were held at his tomb, usually during a *mūlid*.

One Nubian remembers from his childhood: A *karaama* was held in the village mosque or an open space. Everyone brought about LS 1, the villagers slaughtered a domestic animal and distributed the meat to individual households where it was cooked. Some food was brought to the mosque, where the men ate it, whereas the women ate at home.¹⁶²³

Occasions when a *karaama* is performed nowadays are the return to one’s home village after working in the Arab Gulf or the West, the birth of a healthy child, anything where the village community is invited to give thanks for a good outcome or a new achievement. I wonder whether the person hosting such an event also wants to prevent any kind of envy or the ‘evil eye’, i.e. by someone whose child is not that healthy or who does not get the opportunity to work and earn money outside of the Sudan or Egypt.

The simplicity of a typical Nubian meal prior to the *hijra* was described by a Nubian at the beginning of the 20th century:

¹⁶²³ Aḥmad Hamza 2020, p.c. With additions from Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c. – From a more Western perspective a *karaama* is described in GILLEY 2007: 283. In the 1950s and 1960s the Sudanese Pound is said to have equalled in value the British Pound.

[T]hey feed on sorghum, barley, lentils, lupins and wheat, the latter only rarely. Meat is also a great rarity; ... the rural population has it only once a year, ...¹⁶²⁴

Oats and porridge from boiled grains (*gaari*) or porridge from beans (*ashranke* or *ashrankay/kashrangee*) growing close to the shoreline were most common. Rice and thick vegetable sauce (*jakud/jakūd* or Ar. *mulāḥ*) were shared with neighbours and other families.¹⁶²⁵ Meat was only provided when offering hospitality or being more affluent. Not everyone was necessarily given a share.

Another kind of porridge made from fermented millet (*seebe* or *geree*) was popular everywhere in the Sudan. Nowadays, it is mainly eaten by Western and South Sudanese, in Northern Sudan people eat much less millet.¹⁶²⁶ It is offered with different kinds of gravy and possibly a tiny amount of meat.

Another cooked stew in the Dongola Reach is *koddaad*, similar to *mulukhia* (Ar.). It is made from *kodde*, a fast-growing long-leaved plant found close to the river Nile, also referred to as African cabbage. Even when the plant is old its leaves are green and fresh. It takes about three to four hours to cook and needs to be eaten quickly before it turns bad. It is offered alongside *kaabid* (flat loaf of Nubian bread; Ar. *gurrāsa*).

oy is a stew made from dried okra (lady fingers) and a popular Nubian dish that the common folk eat a lot, typically with a flat loaf of bread.

tarkiiny/tarkiin is a small salted fish, mostly dissolved in salt water. It also denotes a typical Nubian dish consisting of that fish and a slimy stew (Ar. *mulāḥ*) having a strong flavour, nowadays offered less than before. One

¹⁶²⁴ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1901: 110; in the German original: “Nun ist ihre Lebensweise freilich unendlich bescheiden; sie nähren sich von Dourah, Gerste, Linsen, Lupinen und Weizen, letzterem nur selten. Auch Fleisch ist eine große Seltenheit; ... die Landbevölkerung hat es nur alle Jahr einmal, ...”

¹⁶²⁵ Muḥammad Dahab 2014, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2014, p.c. In the meantime *ashranke* has become much more expensive and is less cultivated, as Nubians are living further away from the shoreline.

¹⁶²⁶ The ethno-biologist Philippa Ryan (2019, p.c.) would recommend to re-introduce millet in Northern Sudan. It uses less water and leaches the soil less.

variant is dissolved in water (*juude buul*), the other one cooked (*tabxe buul*).¹⁶²⁷

From milk (*icci*) a kind of yogurt (*icci meerel* or *icci naddi*), melted butter (*des*) and buttermilk (*icci bassari/kerriid*) were made, the latter two by shaking. The butter was divided up into four portions and hung on the ceiling of the room, one portion to be eaten each day. After four days the remainder of the butter was heated over the fire and mixed with fenugreek (*karum*; Ar.: *helba*). It was poured into a container and stored. When early in the morning hot milk was drunk, some of this mixture was added.¹⁶²⁸

In Nubia, flat bread (*kaabid*) is the main staple diet, made on a metal baking plate (*deew*) which is also used for baking the wafer-thin bread (Ar.: *kisra*). It needs to be heated before it can be used for baking. The following quote from the early 18th century indicates that the procedure has mainly remained unchanged until today:

They [the people of Mosho] brought us ... bread which was doughy because it is not baked in an oven but ... in the following manner: They pour the dough on the earthen pan which has been well heated on fire ... to the thickness of about one finger, and after one side is baked they turn it over; therefore it is only natural that the outside is partly burnt while the inside is nothing but dough ..., this ... bread ... inhabitants and travellers have to eat unsalted and without lard ... such bread, our Khessere [kisra] is not made of wheat but of durra ...¹⁶²⁹

In the pre-*hijra* Mattokki villages, stockpiling was practised because agriculture was impossible during the flood. Meat was dried over a fire, then salted, in order to preserve it.¹⁶³⁰

If the harvest was below average the whole community suffered, because food could not be imported. Famine occurred periodically and the last famine

¹⁶²⁷ *juude* is Nubian and means ‘to dissolve, to stir’. The second variant is loaned from Arabic *ṭabakh* ‘to cook’.

¹⁶²⁸ Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c. It was demonstrated at cultural celebrations in Urbi (2005) and Shebatood (2019).

¹⁶²⁹ HERZOG 1957b: 127; quoting Theodor Krump’s travel account.

¹⁶³⁰ Khayria Mūsa 2020, p.c.

in the Dongola Reach in the late 19th century was still remembered during the early 2000s.

After the *hijra* wheat (*ille/illee*) became more important for consumption among the Mattokki, similarly in the Dongola Reach later on. Nowadays, bread is mostly bought from the bakery. Due to the availability of electricity the time for the evening meal (Ar. ‘*asha*) that coincided with the final Islamic prayer of the day (Ar.: *ṣalāt al-‘ashā*’) moved from immediately after sunset to about 9 or 10 pm. Meals are less likely to be shared, instead nearly every family cooks for itself. Even when celebrating a *mūlid* many participants return home before the communal meal is taken and eat at home.¹⁶³¹

A24.1 ¹⁶³² *ωᾶCMEN ΓᾒN BᾒΓIL.*

waasmen goon boogil.

waas-men goon boog-il

boil-NEG SUB pour-PTC:IPF

The one who pours [the water] although it has not boiled.

⇒ He gets angry quickly.

A24.2 ¹⁶³³ *EP ELΓON MᾀPEN MᾀWᾒE ΓᾀPKOMOYN.*

er elgon maren mashe gaarkomun.

er elgon mare=n mashe gaar-ko-mun

2SG not.yet millet=GEN small.plate crush-PRT1-NEG

You have not yet crushed a small plate full of millet [seeds].

⇒ You are inexperienced.

⇒ You still have a long way to go.

¹⁶³¹ Zīzī Şiyām 2014, p.c.; Muḥammad Dahab 2014, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2015, p.c.; A. Goo-Grauer 2014, p.c.

¹⁶³² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 170); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁶³³ From ‘Abd al-Latīf Sīd Aḥmad, Lebeb. He heard the proverb said by an elderly woman, with any pronoun (1SG through to 3PL) possible; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

A24.3 ¹⁶³⁴ ΚΑΛΤΙΓΙ ΚΑΛΜΟΥΝ, ΕΣΣΙΓΙ ΝΙΜΟΥΝ.

kaltigi kalmun, essigi niimun.

kalti=gi kal-mun essi=gi nii-mun
 food=ACC eat-NEG water=ACC drink-NEG

He does not eat the food, he does not drink the water.

⇒ He is close to death.

This proverb uses four words from the domain of food and drink.

A24.4 ¹⁶³⁵ ΚΑΛΙΛΝ ΟΥΡΣΕ ΔΕΣΣΕΝ.

kaliln urse dessen.

kal-il=n urse desse-n
 eat-PTC:IPF=GEN root green-COP

The eater's root is green.

kalil symbolises life as one who eats is alive.

desse has a positive connotation. Nubians call their skin colour *desse*.

⇒ There is hope for you.

The proverb is said in the context of divorce. Other women visit the divorced woman and encourage her for the future.

A24.5 ¹⁶³⁶ ΑΜΒΑΒ ΕΡ ΑΡΓΟΝΟΝΓΟΝ ΓΑΡΙΓΙ ΚΑΛΝΑ, ΕΡ ΚΩΛΑΝΓΟΝ ΚΟΥΜΒΟΥΓΙ ΚΑΛΝΑ?

ambaab er argonongon gaarigi kalna, er koolangon kumbugi kalna?

am-baab er ar=gonon=gon gaari=gi ...
 1PL:POSS-father 2SG 1PL=COM=CO porridge=ACC
kal-na er koolan=gon kumbu=gi kal-na
 eat-Q:NEUT 2SG alone=CO egg=ACC eat-Q:NEUT

¹⁶³⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag.

¹⁶³⁵ From Shawqi 'Abd al-'Aziz, Hamennaarti.

¹⁶³⁶ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 176); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein, Aḥmad Hamza. Hāmid Khabīr heard his father say the proverb.

Our father, do you and we eat porridge [from boiled grains] together, and [yet] you eat the egg alone?

- ⇒ As in a family, also in society there is no complete equality.
- ⇒ You are greedy/stingy.

A24.6 ¹⁶³⁷ *ΚΑΡΑΜΓΙ ΚΟΛ ΓΑΡΙ ΟΥΣ ΓΟΔΑΡ ΔΟΓΟΡ ΓΕΝΟΥΝ.*

karamgi kool gaari uus gojar dogoor genun.

karam=gi kool gaari ...

generous=ACC having porridge

uus goj-ar[=n] dogoor gen-un

bad slaughter-NR[=GEN] COMP better-COP

Porridge [from boiled grains] with generous people is better than slaughtered [meat] with bad [greedy people].

uus denotes anything bad, like a cow that moves while milking.

- ⇒ A little bit from a generous person is better than a meal from a stingy person.

- ⇒ He is only pretending to be nice to you.

A24.7 ¹⁶³⁸ *ΚΟΥΛΛΟΥ ΩΕΡ ΤΕΝΝ ΟΥΓΙΡ ΙΓΚΙ ΑΡΚΙΝ.*

kullu weer tenn sugir iigki arkin.

kullu weer tenn sug=ir iig=gi arki-n

everyone 3SG.POSS date.cake=LOC fire=ACC let.fall-3SG

[When baking] everyone lets the fire fall on his [own] date cake.

sug is a “large round flat *loaf* or *cake*, two or three inches thick and about 20 inches in diameter, made esp. for use on journeys.”¹⁶³⁹

Dates are added to the dough.

- ⇒ Everyone works for oneself first.

¹⁶³⁷ From ‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadīq ‘Ālim, Dembo; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁶³⁸ From Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Hamennarti.

¹⁶³⁹ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 181.

A24.8 ¹⁶⁴⁰ ΚΟΥΣΟΥΓΙ ΜΙΣΙΡΙΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΑΒΆΓΚΙ ΣΕΒΕΝ.

kusugi misiril, tenn abaagki seeben.

kusu=gi misir-il ...

meat=ACC overlook-PTC:IPF

tenn abaag=gi seebe-n

3SG:POSS remnant=ACC porridge-COP

He who overlooks the meat, his remnant is the porridge.

⇒ If you miss the opportunity you have to take what is left over.

A24.9 ¹⁶⁴¹ ΑΔΕΜΙΪΟΝ ΔΑΜΜΕ ΚΑΛΚΙΡΑΝ, ΕΡ ΟΪΓΙ ΟΔΟΣ ΔΟΥΜΜΑΡΕΓΙ ΚΑΛΙΝ.

ademiyon jamme kalkiran, er oygi ojos dummaregi kalin.

adem-i=on jamme kal-ki-r-an ...

human-PL=CO:COND together eat-COND-NEUT-3PL

er oy=gi oji-os dummade=gi kal-in

2SG okra=ACC deliver-PFV chicken=ACC eat-2SG

If the people eat together, you deliver the [stew from dried] okra [to those celebrating, and then] eat the chicken [yourself].

dummade has many variants, e.g. *dummare*. Only a stingy host would keep the meat for himself and not bring it to the place where the communal meal is held. Such behaviour is considered shameful.

⇒ Eat together and share equally so that the poor do not feel their poverty.

A24.10 ¹⁶⁴² ΚΟΔΔΆΔ ΤΕΝΝ ΒΑΛΕΓ ΑΓΙΝ ΑΩΡΑΝ, ΔΟΪΡ ΑΝΙΝ.

koddaad tenn baleg aagin aawran, duur anin.

¹⁶⁴⁰ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl.

¹⁶⁴¹ From ‘Abd al-Latīf Sīd Aḥmad Ḥasan, Lebeb; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein.

¹⁶⁴² From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 142); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Aḥmad Hamza, ‘Alā al-Dīn Khayri.

koddaad *tenn* *bale=gi* ...
 stew.from.cabbage 3SG:POSS wedding=ACC
aag-in *aaw-r-an* *duur an-in*
 stay-3SG make-NEUT-3PL old INCH-3SG

The African cabbage stew holds its wedding when it is getting old.

bale Still some decades ago, the wedding ceremony lasted for seven days, longer than the durability of *kodde* that is about three days after harvesting.

⇒ Although he is still young, he already looks old.

A24.11 ¹⁶⁴³ *ENN KOΔΔĀΔ KAPSOCKON.*

enn koddaad karjoskon.

enn *koddaad* *karji-os-ko-n*
 2SG:POSS stew.from.cabbage ripen-PFV-PRT1-3SG

Your African cabbage stew has been ready cooked.

⇒ I have been ready for a long time, yet he has not finished / turned up yet.

⇒ I have been waiting for a long time, but it was not worth it.

A24.12 ¹⁶⁴⁴ *ΚΑΨΨΙ ΤΑΡΚΙΪΡΙΡ ΨΕΓ ΒΟΨΛ.*

kashshi tarkiinyir sheg buul.

kashshi *tarkiiny-ir* *sheg* *buu-el*
 dried.stalk salted.fish=LOC pierce STAT-PTC:PF

The sticks pushed into the *tarkiiny* dish.

kashshi besides denoting dried stalks also means any other sticks or fish bones used for stirring a stew from salted fish.

⇒ He lacks influence.

¹⁶⁴³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 143); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

¹⁶⁴⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 105; and 2016: proverb 103); co-investigated with Rufā‘i ‘Abd al-Laṭīf.

⇒ He is seen in places where he does not belong.

English: He is small fry.

A24.13 ¹⁶⁴⁵ ΚΑΨΨΙΜΕΝ ΓΟΝ, ΤΑΡΚΙΨΙΡ ΔΑ ΒΟΨΝ.

kashshimen goon, tarkiinyir daa buun.

kashshi-men goon tarkiiny=ir daa buu-n

dried.stalk-NEG SUB salted.fish=LOC be.present STAT-3SG

Although he is not a stick, he is present in the *tarkiiny* dish.

⇒ He interferes in matters that are none of his business.

⇒ He does not understand.

A24.14 ¹⁶⁴⁶ ΟΡΙΓΙΑ ΣΕΡΙΨ ΖΑΒΚΙ ΔΟΥΣΚΙΝ.

origil seriny habki duskin.

orig-il seriny habba=gi duski-n

hunger-PTC:IPF barley grain=ACC crush-3SG

The one who starves crushes a grain of barley.

⇒ One who is in need is satisfied with anything.

A24.15 ¹⁶⁴⁷ ΟΥΡΤΙΝΑ ΤΕΝΝ ΑΨΑ ΚΟΛΛΙ ΒΟΨΝ, ΟΡΓΙΔ ΒΕΨΙΝ.

urtina tenn asha solli buun, orgid beyyin.

urtina tenn asha solli buu-n ...

short 3SG:POSS dinner hang PROG-3SG

orgid beyyi-n

hunger stay.overnight-3SG

¹⁶⁴⁵ From AMNA MUŞTAFA, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein.

¹⁶⁴⁶ From Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, Agade; co-investigated with Ḥisayn Hamza, al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl.

¹⁶⁴⁷ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. The female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān replace *orgid beyyin* by *orig tubbikon* ‘he hungered and rested’.

The short one whose dinner hangs [above], the hunger remains overnight.

solli

Still some decades ago, a cooking pot made of metal or pottery containing leftovers was placed in a framework made from palm leaves, and hung from the ceiling of the veranda or the kitchen so that cats and other domestic animals could not reach it.

⇒

He is not clever enough to find a solution to an easy problem.

An easy solution to the problem described in the proverb would be to put a stool (Ar. loanword *bambar*) underneath and climb on it.

A24.16 ¹⁶⁴⁸ ἈΒΛΕΔ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΟΡΙΓ ΤΟΥΒΒΕΛ.

abded buun goon, orig tubbel.

abdi-ed buu-n goon orig tubbi-el

face-PFV PROG-3SG SUB hunger rest-PTC:PF

Although he was facing [the food], he rested hungry.

⇒

Although they waited a long time, they did not get what they needed.

A24.17 ¹⁶⁴⁹ ἈΨΤἌΝ ΝΙΚΙΝ, ΒἌΡΜΟΥΝ.

ashtaan niikin, baarmun.

ashtaan nii-ki-n baar-mun

being.thirsty drink-COND-3SG resting-NEG

When the thirsty one drinks there is no resting.

ashtaan

The one arriving thirstily from the desert at a place offering water faces two dangers, either not to check the water quality, or to drink too quickly; in some cases it may lead to sudden death.

⇒

Don't consume everything! Leave something!

¹⁶⁴⁸ From www.igraweb.net/حکم-وأمثال-نوبية/; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. *tubbi* is a variant of *turbi*.

¹⁶⁴⁹ From Ibrāhīm Muḥammad, Agade; co-investigated with al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl. He replaces *baar* by *beer* ‘to be satisfied’.

M24.1 ¹⁶⁵⁰ *ΔΙΓΟΝ ΤΕΚΚΟΝ, ΦΙΤΤΙ Ἄ ΚΑΡΙΔΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

aygon tekkon, fitti aa karijmunu.

*ay=gon ter=gon **fitti** aag karij-munu*

1SG=CO 3SG=CO unleavened.bread PROG ripen-NEG

I and he [are like] the unleavened bread [that] does not rise.

⇒ We do not get on well with each other. Our relationship is a difficult one.

M24.2 ¹⁶⁵¹ *ΓΟΣΙΡ ΤΕΝΝΑ ΚΟΪΙΡ ΤῸΝ Ἄ ΚΟΛΛΙΤΑΚΚΙ.*

gojir tenna koyir toon aa sollitakki.

***gojir** tenna koy-ir toon ...*

slaughtered.animal 3SG:POSS face=LOC from

aag solli-takki

PROG hang-PASS

The slaughtered animal is made hung from its face [head].

⇒ The good is done straight, the bad the crooked way.

⇒ When you do something, do it right.

M24.3 ¹⁶⁵² *ΚΑΛΓΙ ΦἘΤΙ ΨΕΓΚΙΡΑ, ἸἌ ΚΑΛΤΑΚΚΙΜΝΟΥ.*

kalgi feeti shegkira, yaa kaltakkimnu.

***kal**=gi feeti sheg-ki-r-a ...*

bread=ACC crumble pierce-COND-NEUT-3PL

*aag **kal**-takki-munu*

PROG eat-PASS-NEG

When they crumble and pierce the bread, it cannot be eaten.

⇒ As both sides talk and argue too much, no solution can be found.

¹⁶⁵⁰ From MEKKI MUHAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ, Thābit Zāki.

¹⁶⁵¹ From MEKKI MUHAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ. Thābit Zāki replaces *solli* by *sollir*. Does this underline the transitivity of the sentence?

¹⁶⁵² From Aḥmad ‘Urābi, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with Muḥammad.

⇒ You have to start from scratch.

If a student's work requires a lot of corrections, the teacher may recommend that the student starts on a new page by saying the proverb.

M24.4 ¹⁶⁵³ *ΚΑΛ ΙΔΙΝΔΕΚΙ, ΤΟΥΓΟΝ ΙΔΙΝΔΙΡΕΪ?*

kal idiindeki, tuugon idiindiree?

kal id-i-indi-ki ...

food man-PL-POSS-COND

tuu=gon id-i-indi-ree

stomach=CO man-PL-POSS-Q:NEUT

When the food belongs to the men [to others], does the stomach also belong to the men [to others]?

⇒ Don't overeat while being a guest!

⇒ You are eating too much.

M24.5 ¹⁶⁵⁴ *ΓΑΡΙΡ ΖΑCΑ ΔΑ ΒΟΥ.*

gaarir hasa daa buu.

gaari=ro hasa daa buu-Ø

porridge=LOC small.stone be.present STAT-3SG

In the porridge [from boiled grains] there is a small stone.

⇒ Watch out! Be careful! Be aware!

When A talks negatively to B about C, yet B and C are friends or relatives unknown to A, this proverb is said by B as a warning to A.

M24.6 ¹⁶⁵⁵ *ΙΛΛΕΝ ΕCΣΙΡ ΤΟΝ ΝΙΔΙΡΓΙ, Α ΓΑΝΔΕΡΕΪ.*

illen essir toon niidirgi, aa ganderee.

¹⁶⁵³ From KHAYRIA MŪSA, Maharraga; co-investigated with Asmaa A. Kenawy.

¹⁶⁵⁴ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁶⁵⁵ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad 'Ali, Ḥisayn Shellāli. Muḥammad Şubḥi adds *kitte* 'just' in front of the proverb.

ille=na essi=ro toon nii-ed-irgi ...
 wheat=GEN water=LOC from drink-PFV-CO
aag ganderee-Ø
 PROG walk.conceited.LV-3SG

After drinking the water of wheat, he walks arrogantly.

illen essi Depending on the source, the ‘water of wheat’ is regarded either as unclean or as medicine, cleansing kidneys and intestines. After being left to infuse for a day it looks yellow, similar to beer, but without alcoholic fermentation.

-rigi/-irgi marks a converb construction. When hearing it one research participant with high language competency became emotional: “This is what my grandmother said. One does not hear that nowadays, except for a few older women.” Cf. *-irgi* (M25.7) and its variants *-rigi* (M8.2 and M22.1) and *-digi* (M22.19).

⇒ He was poor, got a little bit and now behaves proudly.

⇒ He is poor yet shows off with a little bit.

M24.7 ¹⁶⁵⁶ *MOPTIP TŌN ΔΕC ᾶ ΒΕΛΝΑ?*

mortir toon des aa belna?

morti=ro toon des aag bel-na
 dried.bread=LOC from fat PROG exit-Q:NEUT

Does fat come out of dry bread?

des means especially the fat from the melted butter.

⇒ Where there is nothing you cannot get anything.

M24.8 ¹⁶⁵⁷ *ANNA KOYCOY ᾶ ΔΟΚΚΙΤΑΚΚΙΜΝΟΥ.*

anna kusu aa jokkitakkimnu.

anna kusu aag jokki-takki-munu
 1SG:POSSmeat PROG chew-PASS-NEG

My meat is not chewed.

¹⁶⁵⁶ From St12; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer.

¹⁶⁵⁷ From Muḥammad Jabāli, Toshke.

⇒ Don't talk negatively about me to others! I have discovered it.

M24.9 ¹⁶⁵⁸ *Βαζαδι Κōμενιλ, Κῑδιτι Κιρσῶα ἄ ἐλι.*

baxadti koomenil, kiidti kirsha aa eli.

baxad=gi koor-men-il ...

luck=ACC have-NEG-PTC:IPF

kiid=gi kirsha=∅ aag el-i

bone=ACC intestines=LOC PROG find-3SG

The one who is without luck finds a bone in the [cooked or grilled] intestines.

baxad (Ar. loanword) has local variants. In M27.3 it is *bahti*.

⇒ He is miserable/unlucky.

The above proverb reminds Khālid Karār of a song sang by Ḥasan al-Ṣughayir:

*Ζōλναϊ Βαζαδ δᾶκι, Κουλουργον Βεττιμ ἄ Βελνε,
Βαζαδ Γιλλε Μαρε Γōν Σεφερῑδ ἄνε.*

zoolnay baxad daaki, kulurgon bettim aa belne,

baxad gille mare goon seferiid ane.

zool=nay baxad daa-ki...

person=AD luck be.present-COND

kulu=r=gon betti aag bel-i ...

stone=LOC=CO palm.tree PROG exit-3SG

baxad gille mare goon seferiid an-i

luck little millet even dried.plant INCH-3SG

When with a person is luck, even the palm tree will grow through a stone, [with] little luck the millet becomes a dried plant [without value].

This song goes along with the next proverb:

¹⁶⁵⁸ From the female relatives of 'Az al-Dīn Qāsim, Debood; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

M24.10 ¹⁶⁵⁹ ΟΥΜΒΟΥΔΤΙ ΡΟΥΩΕΚΙΡΑ, ἄρεδι ἃ δῶϋρκῶμοϋνοϋ.

umbudti rusheekira, aaredti aa duurkoomunu.

umbud=gi rushee-ki-r-a ...

salt=ACC scatter.LV-COND-NEUT-3PL

aared=gi aag duur-koo-munu

earth=ACC PROG reach-PRT1-NEG

When they scatter the salt, it does not reach the earth.

rushee At a typical Nubian wedding salt, perfume and sweets are thrown at the participants. Most of it falls on the ground.

⇒ Too many people are present.

M24.11 ¹⁶⁶⁰ ΤΕΝΝΑ ΚΑΔΕΡ ΟΥΜΒΟΥΔΤΙ COΥΡΡΕΡΑΝ, ἀγαρ δᾶμνοϋ.

tenna kadeer umbudti surreeran, agar daamnu.

tenna kadee=ro **umbud**=gi surree-r-an ...

3SG:POSS garment=LOC salt=ACC tie-NEUT-3PL

agar daa-munu

place be.present-NEG

They tie the salt in her garment, there is no place.

⇒ She is very poor.

M24.12 ¹⁶⁶¹ ΒΕΡ ΒΟΥΡΑΡ ΤΕΝΝΑ COΥΒΑΓ ἃ Γᾶιμοϋνοϋ.

beer buurar tenna subaag aa gaaymunu.

beer buu-ar tenna subaa=gi aag gaay-munu

be.satisfied STAT-NR 3SG:POSS finger=ACC PROG lick-NEG

The [in the state of being] satisfied one does not lick his finger.

⇒ The wealthy person does not accept trifles.

¹⁶⁵⁹ From Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁶⁶⁰ From Asmaa A. Kenawy, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki.

¹⁶⁶¹ From St58; co-investigated with Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid.

M24.13 ¹⁶⁶² *ΚΑΛΛĒ ĒNN Ī MĒNEΛΓ ἄ ΒĒΡΚΙΔΔΙΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kallee enn ii meenelg aa beerkiddimunu.

kallee enna ii meen-el=gi ...

[droppings 2SG:POSS hand be.not-PTC:PF]=ACC

aag beer-kiddi-munu

PROG be.satisfied-CAUS-NEG

You do not cause [him] to be satisfied by the droppings of your hand.

⇒ You are not giving enough (e.g. food).

⇒ Your gift is without a blessing (Ar. *baraka*).

4.25. Clothing

Nubians when describing the past emphasise that garments (*kade/kadee*) resembled each other, outwardly not indicating differences in wealth or status, only gender, underlining the Nubian perception of an egalitarian society, avoiding hierarchies. Exceptions were the magistrate of a district or village (Ar. *‘umda*), and the prayer leader (Ar. *imām*). The king’s garments were not called *kade*, but *degti* (or *degar*).¹⁶⁶³ That is in contrast to many parts of contemporary Africa where there is a correlation of clothing, status and honour:

Being properly dressed honors the other persons, and they feel dishonored if someone is improperly dressed in relation to his status and position.¹⁶⁶⁴

In the past Nubian farmers put on a girdle or a loincloth only:

Boys up to 12 or 15 years go about naked, but the older ones put a leather apron round their genitals ... others, both males and females, tie round their loins a coarse cotton cloth several ells long and about three

¹⁶⁶² From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, ‘Umar Ḥasan, Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

¹⁶⁶³ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2015, p.c.; ‘Umar Ḥasan 2016, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.

¹⁶⁶⁴ MARANZ 2001: 173.

spans broad; in winter-time, when nights are cool here, women wear cloaks of blue and brown cotton, five ells long and 11 ells broad. ... with regard to the garment of the notables, it is the custom for them to wear a wide blue shirt, which extends to the feet.¹⁶⁶⁵

Still a couple of decades ago the average Mattokki man only owned a few wide and loose-fitting garments, in Arabic *jallābiya*, about two for work, one for travel and one especially clean and bright for the *mūlid*, and on Fridays going to the mosque. The clothes were made of the same fabric as boat sails. Only a wealthy man owned more garments. Until not that long ago and still remembered by some Nubians from the Dongola Reach, women put on limited clothing exposing body parts without causing offense.¹⁶⁶⁶ Putting on a white turban marked the wearer as having some kind of status: “Nevertheless nobody puts anything on the head except their kings and the most distinguished of their people.”¹⁶⁶⁷ Nowadays, mainly Sudanese Nubian men wear a turban; when Egyptian Nubians put one on, it reminds them of the Sudan. A Nubian widower showed his sadness by wearing green clothes; also the end of the turban had to be near his head for a period of forty days.¹⁶⁶⁸

One Mattokki man dates the change in Nubian clothing to about 1973. When the Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat opened his country for economic dealings with the West, the Egyptian market was flooded with cheap second-hand clothing that replaced the typical Nubian one. Religion is considered another aspect. How can one explain to a Nubian 16-year-old girl that she should wear the older women’s ethnic clothes instead of contemporary Egyptian ones, especially as so-called Islamic clothing identifies the one carrying it?¹⁶⁶⁹ As a result, and as Nubians mainly dress the same as their

¹⁶⁶⁵ HERZOG 1957b: 128; quoting Theodor Krump’s travel account.

¹⁶⁶⁶ ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod 2016, p.c. Also confirmed in Theodor Krump’s travel account in HERZOG 1957b: 128. One old man from Magaasir Island (2017, p.c.) wonders why contemporary Nubian young men feel sexually more attracted to young women than before, in spite of young women being much more clothed.

¹⁶⁶⁷ HERZOG 1957b: 128; quoting Theodor Krump’s travel account.

¹⁶⁶⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ 2014, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Researcher from Tunis participating at a folklore conference in Cairo 2014, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.

Arab counterparts, Nubian artisans and traders would hardly have any opportunity to sell ethnic Nubian clothing, and production has been terminated.

Putting on no clothing at all is a typical metaphor for shame.¹⁶⁷⁰ More important than the outward is the inner covering, the *sutera*, as expressed in the first Andaandi proverb of this domain; social conflict is covered up to prevent worse from happening. Such a strategy contradicts modern psychology, where a problem and the people causing it are made visible. In such a context one Dongolawi woman related some local knowledge to prevent pain from dominating her inner being while not sharing it: If you pray and have to cry because of an issue with other people, do not get up from prayer until you have ceased crying. Then you have surrendered the issue completely to God.

A25.1 ¹⁶⁷¹ *COYTEPΔN Iλλαp, KaΔEN6I ΔEΓEΔ āΓIN.*

sutera *illar*, *kadenci deged aagin*.

sutera=*n* *illar* *kade-nci* *deg-ed* *aag-in*
 covering=GEN SUB garment-PL put.on-PFV PROG-3SG

Because of the covering, he has put on the garments [and still carries them].

⇒ We do not want to be shamed, so we cover it up and do not tell others.

⇒ Outsiders should not know the insiders' problems.

A25.2 ¹⁶⁷² *KaΔEN ĒN6I*

kaden eenci

kade=*n* *een-ci*
 garment=GEN woman-PL

women's garment

¹⁶⁷⁰ KÖVECSES 1998: 137.

¹⁶⁷¹ From 'Abd al-Raūf, Old Dongola; co-investigated with al-Amīn Muḥammad, Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

¹⁶⁷² From ḤAMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 31); co-investigated with Sāmi 'Abdallah, Shawqi 'Abd al-'Azīz.

- kade* According to the male research participants, at a wedding women wear their best clothes, spending more than men. There is no similar saying about men.
- ⇒ This woman wears beautiful clothes, but is not good at anything else.
- ⇒ He looks better on the outside than on the inside.
- ⇒ He wears sport's wear yet does not do any sports.

A25.3 ¹⁶⁷³ *ΚΑΣΙΡΚΙ ΚᾹΣΕΔ ΔᾹΛ, ΜΑΛΛΕ ΟΓΙΣΜΟΥΝ.*

kasirki kaased daal, malle ogijmun.

kasir=gi kaas-ed daa-il ...

turban=ACC wrap.around-PFV be.present-PTC:IPF

malle ogij-mun

all man-COP:NEG

He who has wrapped the turban around, not everyone is a man.

- ⇒ Not every man is brave, generous and has confidence.

English: Don't judge the book by its cover. – All that glitters is not gold.

variant *kasirki kaasil, malle ogijmun.*

He who wraps the turban around, not everyone is a man.

A25.4 ¹⁶⁷⁴ *COΥΡΡΕ̄Λ ΚΟΥCIN, ΔΟ̄ΥΔΕΛ ΤΑΝΘΕΝ.*

surreel kusin, juudel tancen.

surree-il kus-in juude-il tance-n

tie-PTC:IPF open-3SG stir-PTC:IPF taste-3SG

The one who ties [the garment], opens [it]; the one who stirs, tastes.

¹⁶⁷³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; variant from ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 154); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 48, is the same.

¹⁶⁷⁴ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 47); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Muṣṭafa Hājirtōd. Abāthīr 'Abdullahi replaces *surree* by *digir* 'to bind'.

- ⇒ Go to the one who understands a matter.
- ⇒ The person who performs a task should be honoured because he knows how to do it.
- ⇒ If you do something bad to someone, the victim or their children will take revenge on you or your children.
- ⇒ Anyone who uses magic against others must bear the consequences.

Some Nubians believed that some people had magic powers. While A25.4 rejects magic, A1.16 differs in that it assumes that the miracle is performed by a so-called ‘holy man’.

A25.5 ¹⁶⁷⁵ *ωᾶρ ΒΟΨΝΓΟΝ ΙΡΙΓΙ ΔΕΓΚΙΔΔΙ.*

waar buungon irigi degkiddi.

waar buu-n=gon iri=gi deg-kiddi
 expose STAT-3SG=CO people=ACC cover-CAUS

And the naked person causes the stranger to cover.

- ⇒ Although he has nothing he cares for people outside of his kin group.

M25.1 ¹⁶⁷⁶ *κατρῆρ ζᾶδαωῆρκ ᾶ κολλικίρι, κουλ ἰὸμ τεννα
 καδεῖγ ᾶ γαιῖρε.*

katreeer haajaweerk aa kollikiri, kul yoom tenna kadeeg aa ghayre.

katree=ro haaja=weer=gi aag kolli-ki-r-i ...
 wall=LOC thing=INDF=ACC PROG paste-COND-NEUT-1SG
kul yoom tenna kadee=gi aag ghayre-Ø
 daily 3SG:POSS garment=ACC PROG change-3SG

When I fix something firmly to the wall, he [still] changes his *jallābiya* daily.

¹⁶⁷⁵ From ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27: 2; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁶⁷⁶ From Sa’īd Zāki, Awaad Island; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Hakīm ‘Abdu.

- ⇒ He changes his mind frequently.
 ⇒ He changes his clothing frequently without any reason.
 ⇒ He is a wealthy man.

While a mother may say the proverb about her son intending its second meaning, a wife may only talk that way about her husband if she intends the last meaning showing her pride.

M25.2 ¹⁶⁷⁷ *ΚΑΣΙΡΚΕΔ ΔΕΓΙΑ, ΜΑΛΛΕ ΟΓΙΣΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kasirked degil, malle ogijmunu.

kasir=ged deg-il malle ogij-munu

turban=INS put.on-PTC:IPF all man-COP:NEG

He who puts on the turban, not everyone is a man.

- ⇒ Not every man is brave, generous and has confidence.
 ⇒ He talks without understanding.

English: Don't judge the book by its cover. – All that glitters is not gold.

variant *kasirki kaasil, malle id anmunu.*

He who wraps a turban, not everyone is a man.

M25.3 ¹⁶⁷⁸ *ΚΑΣΙΡΚΙ ΝΑΛΕΛΙ, ΤΕΝΝ ἈΓΙ ΝΑΛΣΑ.*

kasirki naleli, tenn aagi nalsa.

kasir=gi nal-el-i ...

turban=ACC see-PTC:PF-PL

tenna aa=gi nal-s-a

3SG:POSS heart=ACC see-PRT2-3PL

They who saw the turban, they saw his heart.

¹⁶⁷⁷ From Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; variant from al-Ahram newspaper, 5 April 2014: 21, in Arabic script. A few other proverbs were listed in the same edition marked as Mattokki. However, none of them was recognised as such by various Mattokki with proverbial knowledge. For them it was another proof that non-Nubian Egyptians frequently misunderstand Nubian culture.

¹⁶⁷⁸ From Maḥmūd Muḥammad, Toshke. He associates whiteness with purity. There is no connotation to skin colour.

⇒ He has a pure heart, as white as a turban.

M25.4 ¹⁶⁷⁹ *ωΙΡΙΣ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΚΑCΙΡΚΙ ΔΕΓΕΔ ΔΓΙ.*

wirij buun goon, kasirki deged aagi.

wirij buu-n goon kasir=gi deg-ed aag-i
naked STAT-3SG SUB turban=ACC put.on-PFV PROG-3SG

Although he is naked, he has put on a turban.

wirij In Andaandi proverbs *wirij* occurs in semantic domains 19 ‘Body Parts’ and 22 ‘House and Household’: A19.2 and A22.27.

St. transl.: He puts the turban on his head while he does not cover his genitals.

⇒ He brags without having nearly anything to brag about.

⇒ He is foolish.

⇒ He completes the unimportant task before the important one.

English: arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic

M25.5 ¹⁶⁸⁰ *ΔΓΙΝ ΓΟΝ ΩΙΡΙCΚΙΝ, ΤΕΒΙΝ ΓΟΝ ΩΙΡΙCΜΙΝΟΥ!*

aagin goon wirijkin, teebin goon wirijminu!

aag-in goon wirij-ki-n ...
stay-2SG SUB naked-COND-2SG:SUB

teeb-in goon wirij-min-u
stand-2SG SUB naked-NEG-IMP:POL:SG

If you sit naked, do not stand naked!

⇒ When you do something shameful, don’t do it in public.

English: washing your dirty linen in public

¹⁶⁷⁹ From St52; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ, Thābit Zāki. Fathi ‘Abd al-Sayid uses the INS *kasir=ked* instead of the ACC *kasir=ki* with no change in meaning. He considers *degedaa(gi)* as one word. – The proverb has similar meaning as M9.12.

¹⁶⁸⁰ From St73; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Mekki Muḥammad; variant from Thābit Zāki.

variant *aagin goon wirijkin, teebin goon wirijsin dogoor genma.*
Sitting naked is better than standing naked.

M25.6 ¹⁶⁸¹ *ΔΜᾶδε̅ ΒΟῦΛ ω̅ΙΡΙδ̅ ΒΟῦΛ ω̅ΕΡ ΔΟΓ̅ΟΡ ΔΙΓΙΡ Τ̅Ο̅CΟΥ.*
amaajee buul wirij buul weer dogoor digir toosu.

amaajee *buu-il* *wirij* *buu-il* ...
nearly.naked STAT-PTC:IPF naked STAT-PTC:IPF
weer dogoor digir toor-s-u
one above fall enter-PRT2-3SG

The nearly naked one entered and fell over the naked one.

amaajee buul denotes the one wearing a girdle/loincloth only.

⇒ While in need you ask somebody who is even needier for material or financial benefits.

⇒ While you have little I have even less and cannot help you.

M25.7 ¹⁶⁸² *ΕΡ ΜΙΝΝΑΪ ω̅ΕΜΙΡΟCΙΡΓΙ ΔΟΥΚΚΙ Τ̅Ε̅ΒΙ?*
er minnay shemirosirgi dukki teebi?

er minnay shemir-os-irgi dukki teebi

2SG Q:CAUS tuck.up.garment-PFV-CO start stop

Why have you begun tucking up your garment and stop?

Why do you continuously tuck up your garment?

dukki teeb describes something that goes on continuously.

⇒ Why do you stand like that? Are you ready for a fight?

It is related to proverb M26.6 in the following semantic domain.

4.26. Work

Nubia might have looked like a paradise, but life was full of hard work (*jelli*) performed in a harsh climate. The waterwheel was operated day and night so

¹⁶⁸¹ From MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Elephantine Island; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim.

¹⁶⁸² From Muḥammad Jabāli, Toshke; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

that crops would grow. Animals needed looking after. Until recently in more remote villages, women carried heavy items including water on their head.¹⁶⁸³

Typical jobs in a Nubian village besides farming were and sometimes still are:

The village smith (*tabid*) worked in the smithy (*tabintuu*). As well as the sickle (*tirib*) and other agricultural tools, he manufactured nails (Ar. loanword *musmaar*). If gold was available, he also worked on that. The village farmers paid him by working on the irrigated land (*kole*) he was assigned. He was eligible to marry any female person of the village he came from, preferring someone from his extended family. In Lebeb the former smith's tools have been preserved, but are now redundant. Nowadays, some smiths are running companies for agricultural machines or maintaining them.¹⁶⁸⁴

In Hamennaarti in 2018 Ma'rūf Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, a blacksmith using local knowledge and materials, had a turning device similar to a bicycle that is connected to a bellow that heats up the fire. He worked everything by hand, even the teeth of a hoe (*tubro/tubroo*) are individually notched.

Living close to the river Nile, boat (*kub*) construction and boat travel offered further work opportunities. It takes about two months to build a boat, starting from stern to bow. The constructor (*basiir*) keeps the boat's building plan in his mind and supervises the building with the villagers participating, similar to the building of a waterwheel. Allegedly there is still a boat builder in Surtood village south of Dongola. He works according to modern economic principles, charging for each boat.¹⁶⁸⁵

Most craftsmen, such as the village smith and the boat constructor, were not paid in cash. Instead, they received a share in the harvest of an irrigated agricultural plot (*baa*) that the villagers engaged in agriculture harvested on his behalf. It varied, depending on the year's yield. By contrast, the shoemaker (*sulu*) was paid for his work.¹⁶⁸⁶

¹⁶⁸³ Herman Bell 2019, p.c.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2022+2023, p.c.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; and others.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c. For a more in-depth discussion of the payment of workers in agriculture, see NICHOLLS 1918: 24.

House building was community work, as described by two anthropologists in the Fadijja region shortly prior to the *hijra*:

Through *karrey*, the houses are replastered, the fields are harvested, and banquets are provided for large numbers of guests. This relationship is explicitly recognized and clearly stated; those who fail to assume their responsibility in such tasks are ostracized.¹⁶⁸⁷

Owing to the construction of the Aswan Dam and its subsequent heightenings, Nubian men increasingly moved to Egyptian cities to find work, leaving practically no craftsmen in the pre-*hijra* Mattokki villages. In Umbarakaab there was reportedly one weaver (*duhaaniye*). A few other Nubian craftsmen somehow survived by working irregular jobs.¹⁶⁸⁸

Women's work was mainly at home¹⁶⁸⁹ and on the farm, with the second rendered difficult after the *hijra* due to the fields lying further away and the state-controlled economic system. Still, women are creative in finding new avenues of income, such as opening a tiny shop, baking bread to be sold locally, commuting to the next town for employment in offices and shops, or inviting and hosting tourist groups in their homes.

A26.1 ¹⁶⁹⁰ ΔΕΛΛΙ ΚΑΡΔΕΛΓΙ ἄω!

jelli karjelgi aaw!

jelli karjel=gi aaw-Ø

work skilled=ACC make-IMP:SG

Do skilled work!

⇒ Work skilfully!

¹⁶⁸⁷ FERNEA and FERNEA 1991: 159. The *karrey* among the Fadijja is similar to the *feza* in the Dongola Reach.

¹⁶⁸⁸ A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c.

¹⁶⁸⁹ AGHA 2019: 13+14 calls this “emotional capital”. “... bringing up children and fostering trust between society members” should be regarded as “most important concerns.” Without these qualities a Nubian village would cease being Nubian.

¹⁶⁹⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 123; and 2016: proverb 121); co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltod.

A26.2 ¹⁶⁹¹ ΔΕΛΛΙΝ ΑΒΑΓ ΟΓΙΓΙ ΒΑΡΙΝ.

jellin abaaq ogjigi barin.

jelli=*n* *abaag* *ogij-i=gi* *bar-in*
 work=GEN end man-PL=ACC choose-3SG

The end of the work chooses the men.

⇒ A worker's skills and stamina only become apparent after the work has been completed.

A26.3 ¹⁶⁹² ΔΟΥΛΛΟΓΙ ΔΑΜΜΕΚΑΝ, ΨΟΡΟ ΑΝΙΝ.

dullogi jammekaan, shooro anin.

dullo=*gi* *jamme-ki-an* *shooro* *an-in*
 heavy=ACC belong.together-COND-3PL light INCH-3SG

When they [carry] the heavy [thing] together, it becomes light.

⇒ Working together is better than working alone.

A26.4 ¹⁶⁹³ ΤΑΒΙΝΤΟΨΡΝ ΑΤΤΙΡ ΤΕΓΙΛ, ΙΑ ΔΟΥΓΙΝ, ΙΑ ΙΓΚΙ ΚΟΥΝΝΕ.

tabintuurn attir teegil, yaa jugin, yaa iigki sunne.

tabintuur=*n* *attir* *teeg-il* ...
 smithy=GEN near stay-PTC:IPF
yaa *jug-in* *yaa* *iig=gi* *sunne*
 CO:either burn-3SG CO:or fire=ACC smell

The one who stays near the smithy, either burns, or smells of fire.

iig The smell of fire has a negative connotation.

⇒ Choosing the right friends is important. One behaves like them.

¹⁶⁹¹ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 140); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁶⁹² From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag. Muṣṭafa Samiltood expresses the first clause: *dullogi jamme sokkekaan, ...* 'If they carry the heavy [thing] together, ...'.

¹⁶⁹³ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

A26.5 ¹⁶⁹⁴ *ḡākīm an tēbil, tenn kāp naḏḏigi nīn.*

haakim an teebil, tenn kaar naddigi niin.

haakim an teeb-il ...

ruler INCH be-PTC:IPF

tenn kaa=r naddi=gi nii-n

3SG:POSShouse=LOC bitter=ACC drink-3SG

Becoming the ruler, he drinks bitterness in his house [and his territory].

⇒ A governor should take care of everything. Everywhere, from his own home to the territory he governs, he encounters great difficulties.

A26.6 ¹⁶⁹⁵ *ḡākoym an tēbil deewnaar arned anin.*

haakum an teebil deewnaar arned anin.

haakum an teeb-il deewnaa=r ...

ruler become stop-PTC:IPF kitchen=LOC

arned an-in

centre.pillar become-3SG

He who is nominated as ruler, he becomes the centre pillar in the kitchen.

arned is a wooden pillar (var. *ende*) placed in the centre of the kitchen that supports the ceiling. The kitchen, about 5 by 7 metres, is the largest room in an average Nubian house.

⇒ The one who governs is responsible for all tasks.

⇒ A president may not get angry or feel insulted.

⇒ One gas light illuminates the whole kitchen.

⇒ When washing up the towel gets dirty.

¹⁶⁹⁴ From Aḥmad Sāti, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

¹⁶⁹⁵ From Aḥmad Sāti, Buunaarti; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

M26.1 ¹⁶⁹⁶ ΔΙΓΡΪ ΒΙ ἄΩΡΙ, ΔΙΓΡΪΓΙ ΒΙ ΕΛΛΙ; ΓΑΛΪΛ ΒΙ ἄΩΡΙ, ΓΑΛΪΛΓΙ ΒΙ ΕΛΛΙ.

digrii bi aawri, digriigi bi elli; galiil bi aawri, galiilgi bi elli.

digrii bi aaw-r-i digrii=gi bi ...

a.lot TAM make-NEUT-1SG a.lot=ACC TAM

el-r-i galiil bi aaw-r-i ...

find-NEUT-1SG a.little TAM make-NEUT-1SG

galiil=gi bi el-r-i

a.little=ACC TAM find-NEUT-1SG

I will work a lot, I will find a lot; I will work a little, I will find a little.

⇒ Work hard!

M26.2 ¹⁶⁹⁷ ΔΕΝ ΩΕΡΡΟ ΓΟΪCΙΝΓΙ, ΛΕΓΔΑ ΩΕΡΡΟ ΒΟΡΚΙΔΔΙCΑ.

jen weerro goysingi, legda weerro boorkiddisa.

jen weer=ro goy-s-in=gi ...

[year one=LOC build-PRT2-3SG]=ACC

legda weer=ro boor-kiddi-s-a

moment one=LOC demolish-CAUS-PRT2-3PL

What he built up in one year, they cause [it] to be demolished in one moment.

⇒ I have put a lot of effort into this, and what are you doing with it?

M26.3 ¹⁶⁹⁸ Βᾶδκα ἄ ΓΕΡΙἘΛ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΦΕΓΪΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

baajka aa geryeel malle fegiirmunu.

¹⁶⁹⁶ From ‘Adīla Sulaymān, Dehemiit.

¹⁶⁹⁷ From Yaḥya ‘Abd al-Thāhir, Dakke; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzim. The Arabic loanword *legda* may also be pronounced as *lehda*.

¹⁶⁹⁸ From St51; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid; variant from KHAYRIA MŪSA. Compare M25.2 and A25.3.

baaj-ka aag geryee-il malle fegiir-munu
 write-CO PROG read.LV-PTC:IPFall sheikh-COP:NEG

Not everyone who writes and reads is a sheikh/teacher.

⇒ He has some qualifications, yet he is not a teacher/scholar.

English: One swallow does not make a summer.

variant *aa kerril malle fegiirmunu.*

Not everyone who puts up a tent is a sheikh/teacher.

kerri Some Sufi sheikhs set up a tent where people may visit them.

M26.4 ¹⁶⁹⁹ *ΔΟΥΓΡΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΦΑΡΤΕ̄!*

jugrin goon, farte!

jugri-n goon farte-Ø

hot-COP SUB take.out.LV-IMP:SG

While it is hot, take [it] out!

⇒ Don't be late!

⇒ Don't put off a day's work until later!

M26.5 ¹⁷⁰⁰ *KITTE TĒΓAP ΔOΓŌP, ΔIGPĪKIP IMBELAP GENMA.*

kitte teegar dogoor, digriikir imbelar genma.

kitte teeg-ar[=na] dogoor ...

just stay-NR[=GEN] COMP

digrii-gir imbel-ar gen-ma

much-ADV stand.up-NR better-COP

Just staying/sitting, standing up is much better.

St. transl.: Running and risking are better than laziness.

⇒ You are lazy. Get up and do something.

English: Strike while the iron is hot.

¹⁶⁹⁹ From St68; co-investigated with 'Umar Ḥasan.

¹⁷⁰⁰ From St28; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Muḥammad Gum'a.

M26.6 ¹⁷⁰¹ *EP MINΔIP Ω̄OPĒ ΔΟΥΚΚΙ ΤĒBI?*

er minjir shooree dukki teebi?

er minjir shooro-ee dukki teeb-i

2SG Q:CAUS light-NR start stop-2SG

Why do you easily start and stop?

⇒ I am working and do not want to change the way I work.

⇒ You want me to wear different clothes, but I will keep wearing what I want.

It is related to proverb M25.7 in the preceding semantic domain.

M26.7 ¹⁷⁰² *ΓΑΤΤΑC, ΦΙΤΤΙC, ΔΑΒΟC.*

ghattas, fittis, dabos.

ghattas fittis dab-os

dropped broken disappear-PFV

Dropped, broken, disappeared.

ghattas fittis are both Arabic loanwords, derived from *ghatta* ‘to dip, plunge, immerse’ and *fatta* ‘to weaken, crumble’.¹⁷⁰³

⇒ It is finished.

4.27. Materials

Only a limited selection of materials played a role in Nubian daily life. Already the Meroitic kingdom had its own iron (*shaarti*) industry. Craftsmen worked with resources such as gold (*nobre/nobree*), iron, and stone (*kulu*), also with wood (*ber*) and other material gained from different kinds of trees and plants.

¹⁷⁰¹ From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’s sister, Dakke; co-investigated with ‘Amm Sali’s wife. ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ and a woman from West Sehel both replace the nominalizer NR *-ee* by the nominalizer NR *-ar*.

¹⁷⁰² From Nāsir al-Gum‘a, Kalaabshe; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹⁷⁰³ WEHR 1980: 665+692.

Gold appears in Andaandi proverbs only; however, Mattokki women also kept some. Among women relinquishing one's gold was considered shameful. Hence, they invented stories of *ogres*, evil spirits, stealing gold to justify their actions.¹⁷⁰⁴ It is believed that in ancient times there was gold in *deffufa*, the place of the ancient ruins near Kerma; however, nowadays nothing is left, or alternatively while there is still gold in *deffufa* it cannot be unearthed.¹⁷⁰⁵

Nowadays, gold found in the Sudan causes fighting and makes life unbearable. Government officials are said to drive inhabitants out of areas with rich mineral resources. Already before the outbreak of the war in the Sudan in April 2023 one elderly lady from Magaasir Island cursed the day when it was first found:

ΙΛΛΑΖΙ ΝΟΒΡΕΓΙ ΟΨΕΛ ΜΟΡΑΔΤΙ ΔΩΡΕΜΟΥΝ.

Illahi nobregi oosel moraadi aawremun.

May God not have made the wish to dig out the gold.¹⁷⁰⁶

A27.1 ¹⁷⁰⁷ ΝΟΒΡΕΓΟΝ ΔΕΦΦΟΥΦΑΡ ΒΟΥΝ.

nobregon deffufar buun.

nobre=gon *deffufa*=r *buu-n*

gold=CO <place.name>=LOC lie-3SG

And gold is in Deffufa.

deffufa is interpreted as the plural of Nobiin *díffí* ‘ruin, castle’.¹⁷⁰⁸

¹⁷⁰⁴ Taken from the seventh episode of the NubaTube series ‘Our Religion and Stories’: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBAP199JhWY [last accessed on 20 November 2018]. *ogres* were considered to originate from South Sudan and had to pay taxes to the British colonializers. So they stole gold from the Nubians.

¹⁷⁰⁵ The tale about *deffufa* and its gold is told in MASSENBACH 1962: 107.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Nemat Abdalrahman 2022, p.c. who heard it from an old lady. – Similar two Dongolawi who discussed the political and economic situation in late 2021.

¹⁷⁰⁷ From HĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 97; and 2016: proverb 96); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Mahir Muhammad. EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and Mahir Muhammad replace *deffufa* by *Kerma*. It does not denote the village of Kerma at the northern end of the Dongola Reach yet the place of the ancient ruins nearby.

¹⁷⁰⁸ WERNER 1987: 345.

- ⇒ He is unrealistic.
 ⇒ You will not be successful with what you want to do.
 ⇒ I do not expect you to keep your promise.
 English: building castles in the air

A27.2 ¹⁷⁰⁹ *ΦΙΛΙΤΤΙΑ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΝΟΒΡΕΜΟΥΝ.*

filittil malle nobremun.

filitti-il malle noble-mun
 glitter-PTC:IPF all gold-NEG

All that glitters, it is not gold.

- ⇒ Don't judge by the appearance.
 ⇒ Not everyone with a pen and paper is a researcher.

A27.3 ¹⁷¹⁰ *ΑΡΑΒ ΝΟΒΡΕΚΙΝΓΟΝ, ΤΟΚΚΟΝ ΕΝΝ ΔΕΒΙΡ ΟΥΝΔΟΥΡΜΕΝ!*

arab nobrekingon, tokkon enn jeebir undurmen!

arab noble-ki-n=gon ...

Arab gold-COND-3SG=CO

tokkon enn jeeb=ir undur-men

IMP:NEG 2SG:POSS pocket=LOC insert-IMP:NEG

And [even] when an Arab is from gold, just don't put him into your pocket!

- ⇒ Don't trust an Arab as he may easily change his character.

A27.4 ¹⁷¹¹ *ΜΑΣΚΑΝΕ ΩΪΑΡΤΙΝ ΚΟΜΑΝΟΥΝ.*

maskane shaartin komanun.

¹⁷⁰⁹ From Mu‘amr al-Fīl and relatives, Kultoos; co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, al-Sādiq ‘Abd al-Rahmān, Hāmid Khabīr.

¹⁷¹⁰ From Thourya Muḥammad, Binna. ‘Arab’ stands for a nomadic Arab as discussed in more detail in proverbs A2.3 and A30.4.

¹⁷¹¹ From AMNA MUŞTAFA, Binna; co-investigated with female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān. Compare M27.1 where iron is considered ugly. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 153, is the same.

maskane shaarti=n koman-un

beauty iron=GEN shirt-COP

Beauty is a shirt of iron.

koman

is a cloth for males.

⇒

No sweetness without fire.

⇒

Encouragement to the one in whose cheeks the *shulūkh* were engraved with a hot iron.

⇒

Someone with positive qualities does not change.

⇒

Beauty is surrounded with dangers.

The second interpretation is based on a positive understanding of the metaphor *shaarti*: Until recently hot iron engraved the three vertical *shulūkh* on the cheeks marking affiliation and belonging to the Dongolawi ethnicity. The marks were considered beautiful, its artist an honourable person.¹⁷¹²

The background of the last interpretation is that “[w]omen put themselves through all kinds of difficulties and pain just to make themselves beautiful.”¹⁷¹³

SCA: ما في حلاوة من غير نار.

“No sweetness/success without fire/suffering.”

A27.5 ¹⁷¹⁴ *ἰΔΚΑΝΕ ὠᾶΡΤΙΝ ΚΟΜΑΝΟΥΝ.*

idkane shaartin komanun.

id-kane shaarti=n koman-un

man-NR iron=GEN shirt-COP

Adulthood is [like] a shirt of iron.

⇒

Bravery is a positive quality and protects one in difficulties.

¹⁷¹² Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹⁷¹³ MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR’s 1978 explanation to proverb 153.

¹⁷¹⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, Kamal Hussein.

A27.6 ¹⁷¹⁵ *ΔΔΕΜΝ ΤΩΔΚΑΝΕ ΩΔΡΤΙΝ ΚΑΔΕΓΙ ΔΕΓΡΑΝΚΙΡΪΝ.*

ademn toodkane shaartin kadegi degrankiriin.

adem=n tood=kane ...

human=GEN child-NR

shaarti=n kade=gi deg-ran=kirii-n

[iron=GEN garment=ACC put.on-INF]=SIM-COP

The childhood of a human is similar to [as difficult as] putting on the garment of iron.

⇒ Raising a child requires perseverance.

A27.7 ¹⁷¹⁶ *ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΟΝ ΑΪΓΙ ΔΑΚΚΕΛ.*

kulu on aygi jakkel.

kulu on ay=gi jakki-el

stone OPT 1SG=ACC press-PTC:PF

I wish a stone crushed me.

⇒ I wish I had died before hearing this bad news.

⇒ I ask God to kill me if this news is not true.

This saying is only said by women, like the next one.

A27.8 ¹⁷¹⁷ *ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΟΝ ΕΝΝ ΚΟΒΟΙΡ ΟΒΕΛ.*

kulu on enn koccir oobel.

kulu on enn kocci=r oob-el

stone OPT 2SG:POSS top=LOC turn.over-PTC:PF

I wish a stone turned over your top.

⇒ Exclamation by one of the quarrelling parties.

¹⁷¹⁵ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 185); co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan.

¹⁷¹⁶ From Shawqī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Hamennaarti; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein. al-Amīn Muḥammad confirms that the saying is only used by women.

¹⁷¹⁷ From al-Amīn Muḥammad, Lebeb; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood.

Uttering the proverb is not considered to be positive, but neither is it shameful.

A27.9 ¹⁷¹⁸ ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΛΟΓΙ ΣΟΚΚΕΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΟΥΡΚΕΔ ΣΟΚΚΕΝ.

kulu dullogi sokkel, tenn urked sokken.

kulu *dullo=gi sokker-il ...*

stone heavy=ACC carry-PTC:IPF

tenn ur=ged sokker-n

3SG:POSS head=INScarry-3SG

The one who [picks up and] carries a heavy stone carries it with his head.

- ⇒ Everyone is responsible for his own deeds. Take responsibility for the whole matter, not just part of it.
- ⇒ You have to think before doing something.
- ⇒ If you marry a second wife, consider the consequences. It is like carrying a heavy stone.

A27.10 ¹⁷¹⁹ ΒΕΡ ΚΕΡΕΥΚΙΡΙΪΝ.

ber kerenykiriin.

ber *kereny=kirii-n*

wood crooked=SIM-COP

He is similar to the crooked wood.

- ⇒ He is not good. He behaves strangely.

A27.11 ¹⁷²⁰ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΔ ΤΕΚΚΙ ΟΥΨΟΥΡΜΕΝΙΛΓΙ ΚΟΥΔΔΕΓΙΡΙΝ.

kulled tekki unyurmenilgi kuddegin.

¹⁷¹⁸ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; repeated as ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 153); co-investigated with Muṣṭafa Samiltod, ‘Abd al-‘Aal Ṣadīq, Aḥmad Hamza, Rufā‘i ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, Kamal Hussein. Amna Muṣṭafa omits *dullo*.

¹⁷¹⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 162); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁷²⁰ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Maḥmūd Sāti, Muṣṭafa Samiltod, Hishām Bashīr. MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR (1978: proverb 59) is the same.

kulled *ter=gi unyur-men-il=gi ...*
 incense.of.acacia 3SG=ACCknow-NEG-PTC:IPF=ACC
kudde-gir-in
 get.burnt-CAUS-3SG

The incense of the acacia causes her who does not know [it] to get burnt.

kulled describes a kind of “Sudanese sauna”.

⇒ Anything unknown can be dangerous. Before acting one should first find out about it.

In order to cleanse and beautify herself a Nubian woman gathers the wood of the acacia tree, breaks it into pieces and puts it in a hole in the floor as provided in some Sudanese houses. Other women use a special kind of bowl. She burns the wood for a short period and then extinguishes the fire. The smoke rises from the charred wood. She wraps a large sheet around herself in such a way that as she hovers over the smoking wood; all the smoke is captured by the sheet which allows it to completely cover her body. She knows how to keep sufficient distance not to burn herself. The smoke purifies and smoothens her skin with a very nice flavour.

A27.12 ¹⁷²¹ *ΚΟΥΛΛΕΔ ΚΙΪΙΛΓΙ ΚΟΥΔΔΕΓΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kulled kiisilgi kuddegirmunu.

kulled *kiis-il=gi ...*
 incense.of.acacia sit.on.incense-PTC:IPF=ACC
kudde-gir-mun
 get.burned-CAUS-NEG

The incense of the acacia does not cause the one who sits on it to get burnt.

⇒ If it does not fit your position, don't do it!

⇒ Those who are used to, can work on a hot Sudanese day.

¹⁷²¹ From Hishām Bashīr, Magaasir Island; co-investigated with ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan. The proverb could be regarded as a variant of the former one (A27.11).

M27.1 ¹⁷²² *αψιρκανε̄ ω̄ᾱρτιν τογ̄ορ βο̄ῡ.*

ashirkanee shaartin togoor buu.

ashir-kanee shaarti=na togoor buu-∅
 beauty-NR iron=GEN under lie-3SG

The beauty lies [is kept] under the iron.

shaarti has a negative association, in contrast to *shaarti* in A27.4. Here, it symbolises ugliness.

⇒ You are beautiful, yet you wear such ugly clothing!

⇒ If somebody is beautiful, he should not be proud of it.

M27.2 ¹⁷²³ *κουλοϋ τ̄ογ̄αρ̄ ā β̄ῑνε̄.*

kulu toogar aa biinee.

kulu toog-ar aag biinee-∅
 stone break-NR PROG appear.LV-3SG

The stone appears in the breaking. / When the stone breaks, the inside appears.

⇒ The value of a person becomes visible in difficult situations.

English: Gold is tried in fire.

M27.3 ¹⁷²⁴ *ιν̄γον βᾱρτῑ κ̄ῑνῑμα, ω̄ε̄ρῑ βᾱρτῑγον̄ κουλοϋγ̄ ā τ̄ο̄γῑ.*

ingon bahti kinyima, weeri bahtigon kulug aa toog-i.

in=gon bahti kinyi-ma ...

DEM=CO good.luck without-COP

weer-i bahti=gon kulu=gi aag toog-i

one-PL good.luck=CO stone=ACC PROG break-3SG

¹⁷²² From St66; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ, Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer.

¹⁷²³ From Ahmed S. Abdel-Hafiz, Dehemiit; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ.

¹⁷²⁴ From ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Raūf’s sister, Dakke; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber, Muḥammad Jabāli.

While this one is without good luck, others [who have] good luck break the stone.

bahti

In the past some Nubians were said to be able to procure luck by force. Protected by an amulet, not even a knife could hurt the person wearing it.

⇒

One person is lucky, the other one is always unlucky.

M27.4 ¹⁷²⁵ *ΕΚΚ ἄ ΔΟΛΕΛ, ΚΟΥΛΟΥΓ ἄ ΓΟΛΛΙ.*

ekk aa dolel, kulug aa golli.

er=gi aag dol-el ...

2SG=ACC PROG love-PTC:PF

kulu=gi aag golli-Ø

stone=ACC PROG swallow-3SG

The one who loved you, swallows a stone.

⇒

If there is love, there is forgiveness.

⇒

If there is love, everything said sounds good.

M27.5 ¹⁷²⁶ *ΚΟΥΛΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΛΟΓΙ ΙΝΔΙΑ ΤΕΝΝ ΟCСIN ΔΟΓᾠΡ ἄ ΔΙΓΙΡΙ.*

kulu dullogi injil tenn ossin dogoor aa digiri.

kulu dullo=gi inji-il ...

stone heavy=ACC carry-PTC:IPF

tenna ossi=na dogoor aag digir-i

3SG:POSS leg=GEN above PROG fall-3SG

The one who carries the heavy stone stumbles over his foot.

⇒

You must be careful.

¹⁷²⁵ From the female relatives of 'Az al-Dīn Qāsim, Debood; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

¹⁷²⁶ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Muḥammad Jabāli. The last one replaces *dullo* by *duul* 'big'.

M27.6 ¹⁷²⁷ *TENNA ωĒPĒ KOYΛΟΥ ΓΑΛΙΓΜΑ.*

tenna weeree kulu galigma.

tenna wee-ee kulu galig-ma

3SG:POSS say-NR stone resemble-COP

His talk resembles [throwing] a stone.

⇒ What he says is difficult/bad.

M27.7 ¹⁷²⁸ *TENNA KOYΛΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΛΟ ΤΟΓΟΡ.*

tenna kulu duullo togoor.

tenna kulu duul=ro togoor-n

3SG:POSS stone big=LOC under-COP

He [his body] is under the heavy stone.

⇒ He died.

Like other Muslims, Nubians also bury a corpse in a shroud. The grave and the corpse are protected from wild animals that might dig it up with a heavy stone.

4.28. World and Cosmos

The average Nubian is aware of one's position in this world (Ar. loanword *dinyaad/dunya*), in society in general and in his local community in particular, and accommodates to it as much as possible. In Nubian orientation, below are river (*uru/essi duul*) and earth (*guu* and Ar. loanword *arid*; also meaning the ground and the soil); above the sky (*arum* and Ar. loanword *sama/sema/simee*). The full moon (*unatti*, variant *anatti*) has a very positive connotation. Prior to the introduction of electricity, at night it illuminated the land. It is beloved, considered most beautiful and symbolises something far away and therefore difficult to reach. Some Nubians from the Dongola Reach even talked with the moon, promising something in return for success or

¹⁷²⁷ From 'ĀISHA 'ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Subḥi.

¹⁷²⁸ From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab.

gain.¹⁷²⁹ By contrast, the hot sun (*masil*) that was worshipped by ancient Egyptians is disliked. Stars (*wissi*) enabled navigation along the paths especially in a moonless night.

Other topics discussed are wind (*turug*), air (Ar. loanword *hawa*), dust (*esked*), cloud (*nicci*), darkness (Ar. loanword *dalma*), light (Ar. loanword *nuur*), and (being) cold (*oddi*).

A28.1 ¹⁷³⁰ ΔΙΝΙἄΔ COBIPIN, ΓOBIPIN, ΓḠPIN, ΓḂPIN.

dinyaad sobirin, gobirin, goorin, gaanyin.

dinyaad *sobir-in gobir-in goor-in gaany-in*
 world move-3SG dig.sand-3SG gnaw-3SG lick-3SG

The world moves, digs the sand, gnaws, licks.

sobirin gobirin are rarely used nowadays and therefore mainly unknown.

⇒ Remember that this world is not eternal.

⇒ The times and the fate of a person change.

A28.2 ¹⁷³¹ ΔΙΝΙἄΔ ΑΡΓΙ ΚΑΛΛΙ ΔḠΥ ΚḠΙΡΡΟ ΤḠBIN.

dinyaad argi kalli juu kojirro teebin.

dinyaad *ar=gi kalli juur kojir=ro teeb-in*
 world 1PL=ACC push.away go peg=LOC stop-3SG

The world pushes away, goes and stops us as far as the peg.

kojir A rope bound to a peg gives a donkey tied to it a limited radius in which it may gather food.

⇒ Life reaches its limits.

¹⁷²⁹ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹⁷³⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 46); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan, Kamal Hussein.

¹⁷³¹ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with al-Sir ‘Abd al-Jalīl, Kamal Hussein.

A28.3 ¹⁷³² ΔΙΝΙᾶΔ ἀΒΙΔΙΓΟΥΓΙ ΟΨΟΓΓΕΛ.

dinyaad Abiidigugi oshongel.

dinyaad *Abiidi-gu=gi* *oshong-el*
world <family.name>-PL=ACC shake-PTC:PF

The world that shook the members of the Abiidi family.

Abiidi were a group of people living in the Dongola Reach during the time of the Funj. Their deeds were considered evil.

⇒ God punishes the bad.

⇒ Do everything in love and peace, not with power.

A28.4 ¹⁷³³ ΓΟῚΡ ΤΕΓ!

guur teeg!

guu=r *teeg-Ø*
ground=LOC stay-IMP:SG

Stay on the ground!

⇒ Become real!

A28.5 ¹⁷³⁴ ΓΟῚΡ ἄΓΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΣΕΜΑΓΙ ΤΑΒΒΕΝ.

guur aagin goon, semagi tabben.

guu=r *aag-in goon sema=gi tabber-n*
ground=LOC stay-3SG SUB sky=ACC touch-3SG

Although he stays on the ground, he touches the sky.

⇒ He shows off / boasts about himself.

⇒ He wants to practise a profession he is not qualified for.

⇒ He wants to achieve a high position without exerting any effort.

¹⁷³² From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 199).

¹⁷³³ From ‘Umar Aḥmad, Seleem 2.

¹⁷³⁴ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 63); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan; variant from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI. ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016) replaces the Arabic loanword *sema* by *arum*, with *arum* and *aram* being variants.

variant *guur buun goon, aramgi urked shegin.*
While he rests on the ground, he pierces the sky with the head.

A28.6 ¹⁷³⁵ *CEMΔP TŌN ΔIGIPILGI, ΔPILΔ COKKEN.*
semar toon digirilgi, arid sokken.
sema=r toon digir-il=gi arid sokker-n
[sky=LOC from fall-PTC:IPF]=ACC earth carry-3SG
The earth carries the one who falls from the sky.

⇒ Encouragement to be patient and endure troubles.

English: Patience is a virtue.

A28.7 ¹⁷³⁶ *ΩŌ CEMΔGI ENΔEN MΔCIP KΔGIN.*
woo semagi enden masir kaagin.
woo sema=gi ende=n masir kaag-in
INT sky=ACC centre.pillar=GEN without carry-3SG
Oh, it [the earth] carries the sky without a centre pillar.

ende is a variant of *arned* as described in A26.6.

⇒ God is to be praised. He even made the sky without a centre pillar holding it.

A28.8 ¹⁷³⁷ *EP ΓŌYN OYPOYMME WICCIKIPIN.*
er guun urumme wissikiriin.
er guu=n urumme wissi=kirii-n
2SG ground=GEN black star=SIM-COP
You are similar to the star in the black ground [the darkness].

⇒ Everyone knows you.

¹⁷³⁵ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 60). Sharīf ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Hishām Bashīr, and ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan replace *digiril* by *taal*; El-Shafie El-Guzuuli replaces the Arabic loanwords *sema* and *arid* by *aram* and *guu*.

¹⁷³⁶ From ‘Adel ‘Abd al-Wahab, Selagi.

¹⁷³⁷ From ‘Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad, Gurunti.

A28.9 ¹⁷³⁸ ΚΟΓΟΥΝΔΑΡΟΝ ΟΥΝΑΤΤΙΓΙ ΔΟΡΚΙΝ, ΕΚΚΟΝ ΒΟΥ ΔΟΥΡΙΝ.

kogundaaron unattigi doorkin, ekkon bu duurin.

kogundaara=on unatti=gi door-ki-n ...

beetle=CO:COND moon=ACC crawl-COND-3SG

er=gon bi duur-in

2SG=CO TAM reach-2SG

If the beetle crawls to the moon, and you will reach [it].

kogundaara is a beetle associated with love and marriage. It is said to dream of crawling to the moon and marrying it.

⇒ You demand the impossible.

⇒ He was made false promises.

SCA: عرس أبو الدرداق للقمر.

“The dung beetle’s wedding to the moon.”

English: Asking for the moon.

A28.10 ¹⁷³⁹ ω̄ ὄϛ̄Ν ΟΥΝΑΤΤΙ!

woo uun unatti!

woo uun=n unatti

INT crescent=GEN moon

Oh, the crescent moon!

⇒ Said after recognising someone who was absent for a long time.

A28.11 ¹⁷⁴⁰ ω̄ ΟΥΝΑΤΤΙ, ΤΑΡΕ!

woo unatti, taare!

woo unatti taar-we

INT moon come-IMP:POL:PL

¹⁷³⁸ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. The SCA idiom is taken from ZAKI and WYATT 2015: proverb 102.

¹⁷³⁹ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 42); co-investigated with Muḥammad Ḥasan.

¹⁷⁴⁰ From ʿAbdullahi ʿUthmān, Irtide.

O come, moon!

⇒ (The lover says to the beloved:) I love you so much!

A28.12 ¹⁷⁴¹ ΟΥΝΑΤΤΙΓΙ ΔΨΚΙΡΕΔ ΤΑΡΙ ΓΑΛ, ΔΔΕΜ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΤΙΡΤΙ
ΔΝΚΟΡΑΝ.

unattigi aanykired taari gaal, adem malle tirtii ankoran.

unatti=gi aany-kir-ed taar-r-i gaal ...

moon=ACC live-CAUS-PFV come-NEUT-1SG SUB

adem malle tirtii an-kor-an

human all owner INCH-PRT1-3PL

After I came and made the moon alive, they all became its owner [claimed it].

⇒ If you achieve something marvellous or new someone else will come along and claim it for himself.

⇒ Someone else's ideas are taken without acknowledgement.

⇒ In Nubian society a patent and its owner are rarely respected.

The proverb is based on a fairy tale: After the moon dies, some people hit the drums to resurrect it. The moon becomes alive again. One of the drummers claims the result for himself without acknowledging the others' efforts.

A28.13 ¹⁷⁴² ΔΟΥΛΜΑ ΔΟΥΚΚΙΝ, ΜΑCΙΑ ΒΑΔΙΝ.

dulma dukkin, masil baajin.

dulma dukki-n masil baaj-in

darkness pull.out-3SG sun rise-3SG

The darkness leaves, the sun rises.

⇒ Don't be discouraged. The bad will disappear and the good will come.

¹⁷⁴¹ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated with Samira El-Melik-Ziadah, Kamal Hussein.

¹⁷⁴² From al-Sādiq 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Lebeb. *baajin* can be replaced by *belin* with the same meaning.

A28.14 ¹⁷⁴³ *ωΙCCTIG ἄΓ ἱΡIN, ΓOY BEĪIKON.*

wissig aag iirin, guu beyyikon.

wissi=gi aag iir-in guu beyyi-ko-n

star=ACC PROG count-3SG time stay.overnight-PRT1-3SG

He counted the star[s], he stayed up overnight.

guu in the context of *beyyi* means ‘until morning’/‘until dawn’.

⇒ He could not sleep.

A28.15 ¹⁷⁴⁴ *TOYPOYΓ ΔEBEΛΛO TOON MIFFI COKKEN?*

turug jebello toon mingi sokken?

turug jebel=ro toon mingi sokker-n

wind hill=LOC from Q:ACC raise-3SG

What does the wind raise from the hill?

⇒ The weak cannot harm the strong.

A28.16 ¹⁷⁴⁵ *ΖΑΩΑ MIFFI COKKE BOYΛĀTIP TŌN?*

hawa mingi sokke bulaatir toon?

hawa mingi sokker bulaat=ir toon

air Q:ACC raise tiled.floor=LOC from

What does the air/wind raise from the tiled floor?

bulaat (Ar. loanword) Only wealthy Nubians have their floors tiled.

⇒ He has a lot, but he demands from others.

⇒ If he pays with his own money, it makes no difference to him.

¹⁷⁴³ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁷⁴⁴ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with Taha A. Taha. It has the same meaning as A9.1 and A11.3, however, its structure sounds like a riddle.

¹⁷⁴⁵ From ‘Ali Ḥasan, Khandaq; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

A28.17 ¹⁷⁴⁶ *EP KOYΛKŌYΛ BOYΛBŌYΛGI ŌC.*

er kulkuul bulbuulgi oos.

er kulkuul bulbuul=gi oos

2SG secret=ACC remove

He removes the secret. – He airs the secret.

kulkuul bulbuul is a word play. Examples given are: 1) Before the advent of modern media and mass communication, two brothers recited the names of all the village inhabitants in the evenings, starting from the south, ending in the north. 2) My own research on Nubian culture and language.

⇒ He researches/discovers all the secrets of a person/community.

M28.1 ¹⁷⁴⁷ *ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΙΚΚΕ ΤΕΒΙΝ.*

dunya ikke teebin.

dunya ikke teeb-in

world ADV be-3SG

The world is thus.

⇒ He has passed away. We are very sad for you.

⇒ It is strange.

The saying is performed as an expression of condolences after someone has passed away. One can add: *ar malle bi diiru*. ('We all will die.')

M28.2 ¹⁷⁴⁸ *ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΚΕΦΦΕ ΔΕΓΕΔ ΑΓΙ.*

dunya keffee deged aagi.

¹⁷⁴⁶ From Aḥmad Hamza, Lebeb. ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 206) has *kulkuul bulbuul* only.

¹⁷⁴⁷ From Muḥammad Mīrghani, Debood; heard in context from 'Awaḍ Anwar and A. Goo-Grauer while staying on Elephantine Island in 2013. The saying is also reported in OERTZEN (1914: 31). The first two words can be exchanged.

¹⁷⁴⁸ From 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Raūf's sister, Dakke; co-investigated with Sha'bān Berber.

dunya keffee deg-ed aag-i
 world sufficient put.on-PFV PROG-3SG

The world, it has put on sufficient.

⇒ The world does not change.

⇒ I do not care about the world.

M28.3 ¹⁷⁴⁹ ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΦΑΓΑΝ ΔΑΓΑΩ, ΑΒΟΥΛΖΙCĒN ΡΑΚΙΒ ΑΛΦΑΡΑC.
dunya fagan dagash, abulhiseen raakib alfaras.

dunya fagan dagash ...
 world without.understanding
abulhiseen raakib al-faras
 fox ride DET-horse

The world is mixed up, a fox is riding on the horse.

fagan dagash Its precise meaning has been forgotten. In Sudanese Arabic which is influenced by Nubian *dunya fagan dagash* means ‘life is changing all the time’.¹⁷⁵⁰

⇒ The lowly one has become an important person.

Both clauses consist of Arabic words. Still, research participants consider the proverb as Nubian.

M28.4 ¹⁷⁵¹ ΑΔΔΙΒĒ Ω̄ ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΑΔΔΙΒĒ, ΑΙΓΙ ΔΙΜĒ Ā ΖΑΙΙΡĒΡΑ,
 ΓΑΛΙΓΟΝ Ā ΡΑΖΙCĒΡΑ, ΡΑΖΙCΓΟΝ Ā ΓΑΛΙĒΡΑ.

ajjibee woo dunya ajjibee, aygi diimee aa hayyireera,
ghaaligon aa raxiseera, raxisgon aa ghaalieera.

ajjibee woo dunya ajjibee ...
 miracle INT world miracle
ay=gi diimee aag hayyiree-r-a ...
 1SG=ACCalways PROG scare.LV-NEUT-3PL

¹⁷⁴⁹ From Mamdūh Salām, Dakke; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber, ‘Amm Sali’s wife, Fāṭma ‘Abd al-Sayid, Khayria Mūsa. A variant is *faran dakas*.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Yāsir Mekki 2012, p.c.

¹⁷⁵¹ From Ḥammad Nūr, Allaagi; co-investigated with Aḥmad ‘Uthmān.

ghaali=gon aag raxisee-r-a ...
 expensive=CO PROG cheap.LV-NEUT-3PL
raxis=gon aag ghaaliee-r-a ...
 cheap=CO PROG expensive.LV-NEUT-3PL

Strange, o world, strange, they always scare me,
 the expensive [things] become cheap,
 and the cheap [things] become expensive.

- ⇒ Nubian values are changing, especially in post-*hijra* Nubia.
- ⇒ The soul is sold to earn money.

The proverb was sung by Ḥasan Ghazūli. The words are Arabic, only the grammar is Nubian.

M28.5 ¹⁷⁵² ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΤΕΒΝΑ? ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΒΩΔΟΝ ΜΟΥΣΟΥ.

dunya teebna? dunya boodon musu.

dunya teeb-na **dunya** bood-on musu-Ø
 world stand-Q:NEUT world run-COND slip.away-3SG

Does the world stand? I regret, the world runs and slips away.

-on In Mattokki, -on without the COND suffix -ki signifies a regret, as agreed on by the research participants; also in M28.6. The construction is missing in MASSENBACH 1933.

- ⇒ I regret that I need to leave quickly.
- ⇒ I regret that something disappeared.

When a visitor wants to leave but the host urges him to stay, the visitor may respond with the saying.

¹⁷⁵² From Fathī ‘Abd al-Sayid, Dakke; co-investigated with Sha‘bān Berber, ‘Amm Sali’s wife, Thābit Zāki, Aḥmad ‘Ali. ‘Amm Sali’s wife and Thābit Zāki replace *musu* by *misu*. Aḥmad ‘Ali replaces -on by PFV -os, giving the meaning ‘The world runs and slips away completely.’

M28.6 ¹⁷⁵³ *αρ κιννατοδ ερουν γων αρια ανδο τον α καρκικοϋ,
δωλα κινναγεδ αρ αριατι α καρκικοϋ.*

*ar kinnatood erun goon arid ando toon aa saarkisu,
duul kinnaged ar aridti aa saarkisu.*

ar kinna-tood e-r-un goon ...

1PL small-QUAL be-NEUT-1PL SUB

arid an=ro toon aag saarki-s-u duul ...

earth 1SG:POSSfrom PROG be.afraid-PRT2-3SG old

kinna=ged ar arid=gi aag saarki-s-u

small=INS 1PL earth=ACC PROG be.afraid-PRT2-1PL

[I regret,] when we were very young, the earth was afraid of us,
when we became older, we feared the earth.

⇒ Young people believe they can do anything, whereas elderly
people become fragile.

⇒ Don't be afraid! (if said to a little child)

M28.7 ¹⁷⁵⁴ *αριατι γωλαρ τοροϋοϋ.*

aridti guular toorossu.

arid=gi guul-ar toor-os-u

earth=ACC dig-NR heap.up-PFV-1PL

Digging we have heaped up the earth.

⇒ We want to hide because we would rather not see him.

⇒ We worked a lot to achieve something.

M28.8 ¹⁷⁵⁵ *ιν αρδιρ τον βινε βοϋμνοϋ.*

in ardir toon biinee buumnu.

¹⁷⁵³ From Hanā Ṣalāh, Abuhoor; co-investigated with Aḥmad 'Uthmān, Dunya 'Abd al-Fataḥ, Thābit Zāki.

¹⁷⁵⁴ From Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz, West Aswan; co-investigated with Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid.

¹⁷⁵⁵ From 'Āisha 'Abd al-Rāziq, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli.

in arid=ir toon biinee buu-munu
 DEM earth=LOC from appear.LV STAT-NEG
 In this land he does not appear.

- ⇒ He is a little child wandering and roaming around and is not seen by anyone.
 ⇒ He is always somewhere else than he should be.

M28.9 ¹⁷⁵⁶ *CEMA ΔECCIP ANATTI İĀ BĪNĒ.*

sema dessir anatti yaa biinee.
sema desse=ro unatti aag biinee-Ø
 sky green=LOC moon PROG appear.LV-3SG
 The moon appears in the green/blue sky.

- desse* can mean ‘blue’ and ‘brown’ besides ‘green’.
 ⇒ This is a pleasant conversation in a good atmosphere.

M28.10 ¹⁷⁵⁷ *CIMĒP WICCIFI AMIΔΔĒCOY.*

simeer wissigi amiddeesu.
sema=ro wissī=gi amid-deen-s-u
 sky=LOC star=ACC show-1REC-PRT2-3SG
 In the sky he showed me the star [at daylight].

- ⇒ He does not keep his promises.
 ⇒ He is clever enough to convince me when he talks.

M28.11 ¹⁷⁵⁸ *ΔΟΥΓΟΥΡΚΩΛ ΟΥΝΑΤΤΙ ΚΑΡΙΣ ΒΩΥΝ ΓΩΝ, ΑΝΔΙΝΓΑ ΔΙ ΜΙΝΝΑΪ, ἄ ωĒΚŌCI?*

¹⁷⁵⁶ From Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ, Merwaw.

¹⁷⁵⁷ From Muḥarram Maḥmūd, Allaagi; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awaḍ. Asmaa A. Kenawy adds *ugreeski* ‘at day’ at the beginning of the proverb to make the time of day explicit.

¹⁷⁵⁸ From MUḤAMMAD ŞUBḤI, Elephantine Island; written down by A. GOO-GRAUER; co-investigated with Ḥajja ‘Atīāt, Maḥmūd Muḥammad. The late Mattokki artist Şidqi Aḥmad used this proverb in one of his songs.

dugurkool unatti karij buun goon, andinga ay minnay, aa weekoosi?

dugurkool unatti karij buu-n goon ...

blind-ADJR moon ripe STAT-3SG SUB

andi-n=gad ay minnay aag wee-koo-si

1SG:POSS-COP=CAUS 1SG Q:CAUS PROG say-PRT1-1SG

[When] the blind person [said]: “The moon is ripe [full].” –
“What is it to me?” I would have said.

kool does not occur after an adjective. Hence, *dugur* is analysed as a noun.

-si Analog to A6.9 the suffix *-s* preceded by the PRT1 suffix is not analysed separately from the 1SG suffix.

⇒ What he says is not important to me.

M28.12 ¹⁷⁵⁹ *ΜΑΣΙΛΓΙ ΓΑΡΒΑΝΓΕΔ ΙΑ ΤΑΓΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

masilgi gaarbaanged yaa tagirmunu.

masil=gi gaarbaan=ged aag tagir-munu

sun=ACC sieve=INS PROG cover-NEG

He does not cover the sun with a sieve.

gaarbaan (Ar. loanword) has local variants, in Debood *guulbaar*, in Kalaabshe *gharbaal*.

⇒ The truth cannot be hidden and does not change.

⇒ He is a liar; however, the truth will appear.

⇒ I can see right through him.

variant *masil aa tagirtakkimnu.*

The sun is not covered.

variant *garbaan masilg aa tagirminu.*

The sieve does not cover the sun.

¹⁷⁵⁹ From Aḥmad ‘Urābi, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Hakīm ‘Abdu, Khālid Karār, Thābit Zāki; variants from Muḥarram Maḥmūd and Sayid al-Ḥasan.

M28.13 ¹⁷⁶⁰ *ΚΕΡΚΕΡΑΡ ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓΚ Ἄ ΜΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.*

kerkerar turugk aa miirmunu.

kerker-ar turug=gi aag miir-munu
 shiver-NR wind=ACC PROG hinder-NEG
 Shivering does not hinder/conceal the wind.

- ⇒ Encouragement to find a solution when being afraid.
 - ⇒ If something big happens a small solution is not sufficient.
 - ⇒ God willing, there will be a solution.
- English: No good crying over spilled milk.

M28.14 ¹⁷⁶¹ *ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓ ΒΑΛἌΤΙΡ ΤῸΝ ΜΙΓΓΕ Ἄ ΙΝΔΙ?*

turug balaatir toon ming aa inji?

turug balaat=ro toon mingi aag inji
 wind pavement=LOC from Q:ACC PROG carry
 The wind, what does it lift up from the pavement?

- ⇒ Why do you want something from someone who has nothing / is greedy?
- ⇒ What can be taken from someone who owns nothing / is greedy?

M28.15 ¹⁷⁶² *ΤΟΥΡΟΥΓ ΜΙΓΓΕΙ ΒΙ ἌΩΙ ΕΚΚΕΔΙΡ ΤῸΝ?*

turug mingi bi aawi eskedir toon?

turug mingi bi aaw-i esked=ir toon
 wind Q:ACC TAM make-3SG dust=LOC from
 The wind, what will it make from the dust?

- ⇒ You ask someone who has less than you to support you.

¹⁷⁶⁰ From St29; co-investigated with Muḥammad Şubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, ‘Alā al-Dīn Aḥmad. Muḥammad Şubḥi and Thābit Zāki replace *miir* by *ebir* ‘to stop’.

¹⁷⁶¹ From Sayid al-Ḥasan, Aniiba; co-investigated with Thābit Zāki, Khayria Mūsa, Khālid Karār.

¹⁷⁶² From ‘Adīla Sulaymān, Dehemiit; co-investigated with Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid. He replaces *aawi* by *inji* ‘to carry’.

⇒ What can a poor person take from another poor person?

M28.16 ¹⁷⁶³ δᾶNON NI66I BEΛKI!

jaanon nicci belki!

jaan-on nicci bel-ki

buy-OPT cloud exit-COND

Buy, if the cloud comes out.

St. transl.: In the time of the apricot.

⇒ You will never do it.

M28.17 ¹⁷⁶⁴ ΔΑΛΜΑ ΔᾶΜἘΚΙΝ, ΝῶΥΡ ἰᾶ ΒἸΝἘΜΝΟΥ.

dalma daameekin, nuur yaa biineemnu.

dalma *daa-mee-ki-n* ...

darkness be.present-NEG-COND-3SG:SUB

nuur *aag biinee-munu*

light PROG appear.LV-NEG

When there is no darkness, the light does not appear.

⇒ Sorrow will be followed by joy.

⇒ Without sorrow there would be no joy.

M28.18 ¹⁷⁶⁵ ΟΔΙΡ ᾶ ΩΕἰῖᾶ ΕΡᾶ.

odir aa sheyya era.

od=*ro* *aag sheyya e-r-a*

cold=LOC PROG make.fire be-NEUT-3PL

In the cold they make a fire.

⇒ Stop causing trouble. Do something beneficial!

¹⁷⁶³ From St56; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Awaḍ.

¹⁷⁶⁴ From Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fataḥ, Merwaw. Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid regards it as wisdom (Ar. *ḥikma*).

¹⁷⁶⁵ From Sha‘bān ‘Abd al-Rahiim, Dakke; co-investigated with Muḥammad Jabāli; variant from Thābit Zāki.

variant *odir yaa duushshosi.*
 In the cold he became softened.

4.29. Celebrations

Most Nubians enjoy weddings (*bale, erkane/erkenee*) and other celebrations. The whole village, or in the towns and cities the whole neighbourhood, is invited and joins in. The title of a song ‘A Nubian wedding is a wedding of all people’ performed regularly by the music ensemble of the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’ illustrates this.

Dancing (*baanti/baatti*) takes place at every Nubian wedding, unless a close relative has died shortly beforehand. In the past in the Sudan, a choreography was performed, accompanied by drumming and singing, with two young men, both holding a stick, and one young woman dancing together. The young woman danced with one of the young men, then with the other. Each young man tried to win her favour for himself.¹⁷⁶⁶ A Dongolawi young woman also chose her male dancing partner by shaking her head and throwing her hair on the chosen one (*hushshi*), without being concerned about her reputation.

Also among the Mattokki young men and women danced together. One such wedding dance was described in 1905, the other one about 25 years later:

Often one or two young girls from the bridegroom’s relatives enter the inner circle [of the dancing men], gracefully mature and decent figures. The veil, that otherwise covers the head, rests on their shoulders while they carry baskets and sweets on their heads; thus dancing they enter the closed circle. ... many young men rush toward the slowly moving girls, two in front, two behind them and are driven forward and backward by the dancing girls, ...¹⁷⁶⁷

¹⁷⁶⁶ People in Urbi 2005, p.c. A similar choreography can still be observed among the Nuba in places where Arab influence is limited.

¹⁷⁶⁷ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN 1905: 88; in the German original: “Oft auch betreten ein bis zwei junge Mädchen aus der Verwandtschaft des Bräutigams den inneren Kreis [der tanzenden Männer], anmutig gewachsene und wohlhabende Gestalten. Der sonst den Kopf bedeckende Schleier ruht auf ihren Schultern, während sie auf dem

Young men form circles, clapping rhythmically. A small girl, heavily veiled, and with her gift on her head, enters this circle and dances; after a while she is relieved by another. As far as I am aware, a dance like this, with young men and girls operating together, is not practised anywhere else in Egypt; but in Nubia ... including at weddings.¹⁷⁶⁸

These days, only the wedding couple (*erkanekool/erkenekool*) dance together, otherwise male and female participants move around in different circles. At a typically Egyptian Nubian wedding the accompanying music is very noisy, to the extent that even non-Nubian Egyptians complain. Only in Egyptian cities occasionally a Nubian young woman dances without head covering. However, their numbers have decreased during the last decades.

Astonishingly in this domain one finds so few Andaandi proverbs and no Mattokki proverb at all.

A29.1 ¹⁷⁶⁹ *BĀNTIP TŌλ, OYPKI TAGIPMOYN.*

baantir tool, urki tagirmun.

baan-ti=r toor-il ur=gi tagir-mun

dance-NR=LOC enter-PTC:IPF head=ACC cover-NEG

She who enters in the dance, she does not cover the head.

Haupte Körbe und Süßigkeiten tragen; so betreten sie tanzend den geschlossenen Kreis. ... viele, junge Männer eilen den sich nur langsam bewegenden Mädchen entgegen, zwei stellen sich vor, zwei hinter sie und werden von den tanzenden Mädchen bald vorwärts und bald rückwärts getrieben, ..." – Another early description of traits in Nubian dances is found in SCHÄFER 1917: 52.30.

¹⁷⁶⁸ MASSENBAACH 1931: 198-199; in the German original: "Es bilden sich Kreise von jungen Männern, die rhythmisch in die Hände klatschen. In diesen Kreis tritt tief verschleiert ein kleines Mädchen ein, mit ihrer Gabe auf dem Kopf und tanzt; nach einer Weile wird sie von einer anderen abgelöst. Ein derartiger Tanz, bei dem Jünglinge und Mädchen zusammen wirken, kommt meines Wissens in ganz Ägypten nicht vor; aber in Nubien werden auch bei Hochzeiten ähnliche Reigen getanzt."

¹⁷⁶⁹ From EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; co-investigated with 'Abdullahi Naṣr al-Dīn; variant from 'ABD AL-'AAL AḤMAD HAMAT 2014: 93, with revised orthography. – MOHAMED MUTWELI BADR 1978: proverb 171, is more compact: "The dancer doesn't veil her face." The last interpretation is taken from there.

- tagirmun* When a woman from the Dongola Reach entered the circle of a dance, she uncovered her hair without losing her reputation.
- ⇒ If you want to get something you need to accept it in its entirety.
- ⇒ One should not stop after having solved half the problem.
- ⇒ In *Ramaḍān*, if you fast you should also pray. Both belong together.
- ⇒ Someone who feels no shame can do anything.
- variant *baanil tenn konygi tagirmunu.*
The one who dances does not cover her face.

A29.2 ¹⁷⁷⁰ *BāNEΔ Tā ḍḍḍO ʒOYΩΩI OYNΔOYPOE!*

baaned taar addo hushshi undurwe!

baan-ed taar ay=ro hushshi undur-we
dance-PFV come 1SG=LOC shake.ones.head insert-IMP:2PL

The dance has finished, come, shake and put the head at me!

hushshi/ushshi Here, *hushshi* is not being performed during but after the dance.

- ⇒ He is blaming someone else.
- ⇒ He is a coward.

4.30. Life, Calamities and Death

The late Mattokki poet Maḥmūd Muḥammad described the world poetically as having two doors. A human being enters through the one (birth; *usked/uskid*) and leaves by the other (death; *diyar*, also *belar*).

Even if many contemporary Mattokki glorify their former life along the river Nile in terms of being healthier, there were diseases (*odde/oddee*), as stated about three hundred years ago by an outside traveller:

¹⁷⁷⁰ From AMNA MUŞTAFĀ, Binna; co-investigated by Aḥmad Hamza.

In these villages [in Nubia] no other diseases are prevalent, except abostem, ulcer, coughing and ophthalmia; but *il mal Francese* (that is syphilis) is common.¹⁷⁷¹

Prior to the *hijra* a Fadijja Nubian told an American anthropologist:

“It [Nubia and its environment] is pure, my friends, no dirt, no germs.”
[The anthropologist thought in her mind] I would have liked to agree with him, but I could not. . . ., thinking of the constant dysentery from which Muhammed’s twins suffered, the eye and ear infections that plagued the children, the women who died in child-birth.¹⁷⁷²

Nowadays in winter pupils shower less, and shawls and bedding are used collectively, facilitating the spread of illnesses, such as fungal infections.¹⁷⁷³

The following Nubian lexemes, without Arabic loanwords, relate to health issues. They cover many of the diseases typical for Nubia:¹⁷⁷⁴

Andaandi	Mattokki	English
<i>bariski</i>	<i>egir</i>	to vomit
<i>bud</i>	<i>bud</i>	to sprain a limb
<i>dungurkane</i>	<i>dugur</i>	blindness
<i>gushshi buu</i>	<i>toog buu</i>	broken (bone)
<i>kohil</i> or <i>koyil</i>	<i>fogor</i>	to limp, be lame
<i>jereb</i>	<i>jarab</i>	skin decease, transmitted by camels

¹⁷⁷¹ HERZOG 1957b: 126; quoting Theodor Krump’s travel account. Herzog was an anthropologist and no medical doctor. To a German nurse . (Barbara Wiesner 2020, p.c.) with long-time experience in medical services in Nubia, ‘abostem’ is unknown. I interpret it as ‘abscess’. ‘ophthalmia’ may stand for ‘ophthalmia’ or ‘trachoma’ that affects the eye and is still wide-spread in northeast Africa

¹⁷⁷² FERNEA 1970: 253-254.

¹⁷⁷³ School director from the Dongola Reach 2018, p.c. Pupils with a fungal infection are not allowed to attend school. For scorpions affecting children, cf. semantic domain 13 ‘Animals Regarded as Dangerous’.

¹⁷⁷⁴ While Andaandi lexemes stem from a variety of speakers, most Mattokki lexemes were given by Khayria Mūsa when teaching a class at the Kandake Club in Cairo.

Andaandi	Mattokki	English
?	<i>kuuki</i>	inguinal hernia
<i>missikal</i>	<i>missikal</i>	pus of the sick eye
<i>mumundar</i>	<i>mumundar</i>	dumbness
<i>newerti kessin</i>	<i>hikka</i>	breathing difficulties, respiratory problems
<i>neyye</i>	<i>neyye</i>	to swell
<i>terig</i>	<i>terig</i>	deaf
<i>toskide</i>	<i>toskidee</i> or <i>ersidee</i>	cough
<i>tuu oddi</i>	<i>tuun oddee</i>	stomach ache
<i>tuun nogiid</i>	<i>tuugiriid</i>	diarrhoea
<i>urn odde</i>	<i>urn oddee</i>	headache

Local medical experts (*basiir*)¹⁷⁷⁵ use similar methods for curing animals (as camels and donkeys) as well as humans to this day. Already three hundred years ago:

If anyone suffers from sciatica they fetch a cotton cloth, bind it very firmly to the thickness of a thumb, set it alight and cauterize the spine up to the neck, so that a space of two or three fingers' width lies between each branding-mark. In a similar way they treat colic, cauterizing both sides of the navel. To remove a headache they apply this treatment behind the ears and on the temples.¹⁷⁷⁶

In the 1980s, an Englishman staying in a Sukkot Nubian village with no hospital close by observed a local *basiir*:

... in El Ghaba I was to witness an old blind 'baseer' treat a footballer's wrenched knee by applying the red hot head of a six inch nail to the

¹⁷⁷⁵ The work of the medical *basiir* is described in AHMED AL-SAFI 2007: 390-391, where he or she (also women could become a *basiir*) is called a 'bone-setter'. A *basiir* is also an engineer, cf. semantic domains 2 'Waterwheel' and 26 'Work'.

¹⁷⁷⁶ HERZOG 1957b: 126; quoting Theodor Krump's travel account. Samuel Ali Hissein in GRATTAN GUINNESS 1886: 208 confirms the application of fire in Nubian medicine.

damaged area. The boy had submitted to the ‘*mismaar*’ without displaying a hint of fear and swore later that his injury had been healed.¹⁷⁷⁷

A Dongolawi woman told how she had climbed up a date palm as a child. Its thorns that pinioned her broke off and she fell down. Her femur was broken, she could not stand up. To deaden the pain the healer placed a red-hot hammer on her spine a hands-length below the neck before straightening the leg and putting it in plaster. The scar is about five centimetre long and the area underneath still causes severe pain to this day.¹⁷⁷⁸

One Fadijja Nubian gives a vivid description of a surgery from his childhood in pre-*hijra* Nubia where there were no hospitals:

One of the village elders took up the matter of treating my injury. I will never forget those long painful hours that went by so slowly while I lay buried up to my neck in a hole that the people had dug. They had filled up the hole around me with soft fine sand, then built a fire around the hole so that the heat would penetrate through the sand to the injured part of my body. That made me perspire heavily, so that sweat from my body came up through the sand.

I had to stay buried in the sand until sunset, when they took me out and massaged my whole body, especially my injured leg, with oil which they had extracted from special plants. Then they rubbed egg white all over my leg and sprinkled goat’s hair on it. This hardened and helped to keep my leg from moving. One old woman expertly wove palm leaves which she wrapped around my leg and this immobilized it like a cast. Finally they fed me a very hearty meal, and I fell fast asleep.

... In less than a week I was completely well and was right back to playing all the games.¹⁷⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷⁷ MARSHALL 1992: 8. *mismaar* is a variant of *musmaar* ‘nail’.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Woman from Aartigaasha Island 2010, p.c. to my wife.

¹⁷⁷⁹ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

Further treatments that include fire are listed below, separate for Dongolawi and Mattokki. I begin with treatments, remedies and surgeries known among the inhabitants of the Dongola Reach. Some of them are still in use.¹⁷⁸⁰

- A badly torn skin is first rubbed with oil, then the hard skin is burned off. The next day the skin should be fine.
- Hepatitis is treated by burning the arms with a red-hot metal bar until they bleed.
- One lady, now deceased, performed minor surgeries on broken bones (*tomed*). She used wetted date cones, and placed them on the broken area. They dried and became as firm as plaster.
- Rheumatism is reduced by burning acacia wood and inhaling its incense (*kulled*) while standing above it. The fume expels sweat from the pores.
- Certain leaves disinfect the body after a snake or scorpion bite.
- A fungus on one's finger is wrapped in an onion.
- The tiny seeds of the garden cress (*asharaad*, *Lepidium sativum*) boiled in milk is used to treat a cold and a tonsil disease. It also has a positive effect on the nervous system.
- The fruit of the doum palm helps with high blood pressure.
- The fruit (*juurte*) of the *sant* acacia tree and garlic are preventives against many illnesses. When Dongolawi Nubians were unsure how to deal with Covid-19, *juurte* and garlic were means to protect themselves, as they had done about 50 years ago, when another pandemic had hit them.

During the Covid-19 pandemic especially women did not name the illness 'Covid-19' or 'Corona', instead they spoke of *bela* (Ar. *bela'*) 'affliction'. They held a *karaama* to ask for God's mercy. It was said:

ΒΕΛΑΓΙ ΚΑΡᾶΜΑΓΕΔ ΔΕΓΙΡΡΑΝ.
belagi karaamaged degirran.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Family of Maḥmūd Sa'īd 2001, p.c.; Urbi villagers 2006, p.c.; Yāsir Mekki 2015, p.c.; al-Sir 'Abd al-Jalīl 2015, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017+2020, p.c.; 'Alā al-Dīn Khayri 2022, p.c.; Shawqī 'Abd al-'Azīz 2023, p.c.; 'Abd al-Muniem Muḥammad 2023, p.c.; Muṣṭafa Zibeir 2023, p.c.

bela=gi *karaama=ged* *degir-r-an*
 affliction=ACC meal of generosity=INS cover-NEUT-3PL
 They covered the illness with a *karaama*.¹⁷⁸¹

Mattokki Nubian remedies and surgeries that include fire were:

- When ill a heated nail is driven into the skull's centre resulting in high fever and subsequently the body's healing. A similar procedure may be carried out at the back of the neck.¹⁷⁸²
- Fire is lit in an earthenware jug (*kubee*). It is held against the diseased area and closed it off airtight. Thereby the disease is drawn out.¹⁷⁸³

Other treatments and remedies known among the Mattokki:¹⁷⁸⁴

- With fractured and broken bones wood and dough is applied to heal the fracture.
- Against fever the tongue is rubbed with a mustard bush (*salvadora persica*) until it starts bleeding, or alternatively henna is drunk.
- A finger stung by a scorpion was once healed by putting the finger into a living dove. The dove died, the person stung survived.
- Any ill body part is packed in Nile mud. That also helps with high temperature, rheumatism, and headache.
- To increase blood circulation animal fat is rubbed on one's legs. Afterwards the person sleeps under a blanket of animal wool. By the next morning the legs are rinsed with hot water and a black stone is used to rub the skin off.
- Oriental frankincense (*olibanum*; Ar. *lubān al-ḍakar*) mixed with cold water, or the powdered fruit of the doum palm mixed with hot water, drunk

¹⁷⁸¹ Muḥammad Sharīf 2023, p.c. It is not obvious whether a *bela* is a punishment sent from God. Kamal Hussein (2023, p.c.) denies it in many cases.

¹⁷⁸² Mattokki men 2006, p.c. I met the patient. The scar is still visible.

¹⁷⁸³ Faṭḥi Sāyid 2022, p.c.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Umm Ḥamdi 2001, p.c.; Muḥammad Gum'a 2005, p.c.; Faṭḥi 'Abd al-Sayid 2014, p.c.; Muḥammad Dahab 2014, p.c.; Aḥmad 'Ali 2015, p.c.; Faḍl Aḥmad 2016, p.c.; Aḥmad 'Uthmān 2019, p.c.; Khālid Karār 2019, p.c.; Asmaa A. Kenawy 2023, p.c.; Ḥisayn Shellāli 2023, p.c.

or inhaled serve against chest pain. The last one also helps when blood pressure is irregular.

- Fenugreek (*karum*) with milk (*icci*) helps the nerves, works against cholesterol and fats, cleans the liver, stimulates breast milk production.
- Eating white (date) honey and black cumin each morning keeps one's strength up and prevents illnesses (including cancer).
- The fruit (*juurte*) of the *sant* acacia is used as a preventive and cure against bacterial illnesses. It is burnt like incense or chewed between the teeth. When Mattokki Nubians did not know how to deal with Covid-19, *juurte* was one of their means to protect or cure themselves, as also among the Dongolawi. To a person ill with Covid-19 was said:

ΕΡ ΟΔΔΙΚΙ, ΔΟΥΡΤΕΓΙ ΔΩ!
er oddiki, juurtegi aaw!

‘If you are ill, take the fruit of the *sant* acacia.’!

Instead of mentioning ‘Covid-19’ or ‘Corona’ explicitly, Mattokki said: *felannay bidaasu*. ‘It came to the person.’¹⁷⁸⁵

Sorrow and pain are carried as a community. Besides medical treatment, relationship building is a significant part of the healing process. Visiting the sick is obligatory; during this time enmities are buried, possibly resulting in reconciliation, symbolised by a handshake. If a Nubian does not visit an ill acquaintance, that Nubian in turn loses his support in times of need.¹⁷⁸⁶ Such customs lead “to the high degree of social equilibrium and solidarity which is a striking feature of a Nubian village.”¹⁷⁸⁷ Perhaps elderly Nubians remember this community spirit and hence regard their former illnesses as less difficult.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Şabri Aḥmad 2023, p.c.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Yāsir Muḥammad 2004, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2010+2017, p.c. – Other times of reconciliation are particularly before a religious holiday and before the start of the pilgrimage to Mekka (*hajj*).

¹⁷⁸⁷ KRONENBERG and KRONENBERG 1963: 307. Their observation from the Halfawi Nubian village of Serra West is also valid for other Nubian villages.

Even with improved medical facilities “medical services [are] of dubious quality”¹⁷⁸⁸ in Northern Sudan resulting in many ill Nubians bypassing Dongola town and its hospitals and travelling straight to the capital Khartoum. In 1979 a German nurse working in Northern Sudan wrote:

For two months, five qualified male nurses have left us for Saudi Arabia, ... Our gynecologist cannot work for lack of material, medicine and staff.¹⁷⁸⁹

That shortage has continued until today. In Egypt, many Nubians are less afraid of an illness than of the medical costs that are associated with it.

A faithful Nubian wants to prepare for one’s death yet is also certain that the children will carry on. Some Mattokki born before the *hijra* claim that dying in Lower Nubia differed from nowadays. There old people died “from God”, meaning a sudden death at the time determined by God while still active. In post-*hijra* Nubia old and even young people are supposed to die from illnesses caused by and related to the harsh climate.¹⁷⁹⁰

Nowadays even with enhanced medical facilities the date of death continues to be considered as determined by God, as “one does not die from a disease, but one dies from the will of *Allāh*.”¹⁷⁹¹ When there was an incubator in Dongola hospital a baby born prematurely was placed in it and made slow progress until the parents decided to take the baby home, as in their mind it was God’s will whether the baby survived or not. Shortly afterwards it died.

Killing a human occurs three times in the proverbs collected, all in other semantic domains: M13.4, M14.15 and A23.10. There is also some fear that death can be caused by verbal statements made by others without inflicting physical harm. One old Mattokki woman said that her husband met another man who became very angry and told him that he would die tomorrow. Indeed, on the next day her husband died.

¹⁷⁸⁸ FEGLEY 2011: 116

¹⁷⁸⁹ SCHENKEL 1980: 16; in the German original: “Seit zwei Monaten sind uns fünf diplomierte Pfleger nach Saudi-Arabien abgewandert, ... Unser Gynäkologe kann nicht arbeiten aus Mangel an Material, Medikamenten und Personal.”

¹⁷⁹⁰ ‘Abdallah “Jamāl” 2016, p.c.

¹⁷⁹¹ A Nubian 2023, p.c.

After the death the *kubuddar* rite is performed. Someone rides on a donkey and announces the death to the villagers in a special intonation. A lamentation (*talagiye*) which also praises the deceased is sung. The dead person is put into a shroud and placed on a sleeping bench or bed, washed, embalmed with perfume and then carried to the cemetery.¹⁷⁹²

Nubian women are known to cry dearly after the death of even a far relative. While the women's wailing may sound ritualistic a Mattokki man well versed in Nubian sociocultural traits recommends taping their wailings as they express the heart's feelings while being in sorrow. Hence, in times of telegraph transmission the workmen in a telegraph office passed on a death message, but only to men. In the Dongola Reach at funerals women stay at home. Also among the Mattokki they are unwelcome. By contrast, an old painting showed Nubian men and women going together to a burial.¹⁷⁹³

In post-*hijra* Toshke younger relatives carry the deceased to the cemetery, while the elderly ensure that burial rites are properly observed. Until recently the burial of someone who had died at night took place at sunrise, but today the path to the cemetery in Toshke is electrically lit so that burials can take place at any time. When the sleeping bench was brought back to the village, it stood in front of the house for seven days, the period of public mourning, before being taken back inside.¹⁷⁹⁴

If a married man returns from a funeral, he should not greet a groom. It was believed that in consequence the bridegroom might become sick. Until about fifty years ago, Nubians in the Dongola Reach believed that the dead could visit their former home at night.¹⁷⁹⁵

¹⁷⁹² ‘Abd al-‘Athīm ‘Abd al-Hamīd 2005, p.c. *kubuddi* ‘to give important news’. I observed the same in a Mattokki resettlement village.

The Covid-19 epidemic clashed with Nubian sociocultural traits. According to Muslim law, one may only be buried after ablution. However, twice in a Fadijja village no one was willing to wash a dead person who had died with the Covid-19 virus.

¹⁷⁹³ Richard Lobban 2005, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2016, p.c.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Son of Maḥmūd Muḥammad 2012, p.c.; Samira El-Melik-Ziadah 2018, p.c.; Kamal Hussein 2020, p.c.; Ḥisayn Shellāli 2022, p.c.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Hāmīd Khabīr 2018+2020, p.c.

These days, men and women express their grief for less than seven days. Guests are invited for meals; breakfast and supper are prepared at the home of the deceased, and lunch, where the majority of guests is expected, is prepared by the women of the village.¹⁷⁹⁶

When attending a funeral visitors donate some money or food to support the family of the deceased. In this way Nubians ensure that the mourners get the maximum amount of communal support. Not attending a funeral, or if prevented due to distance or illness and not sending a condolence, leads to exclusion from the community and withdrawal of support in times of need.

After the death of her husband, the wife wears white clothing for four months and ten days, as prescribed by Islamic law. She also does not leave the house.

Cemeteries are set outside of the village in the desert, prior to the *hijra* above the village. Since the construction of the Aswan Dam in 1902 and until the creation of the Aswan High Dam in 1964, when the water level fell, Mattokki Nubians could still see the ancestral graves and cemeteries. Only with the building of the Aswan High Dam were these graves lost under the water, causing great emotional distress; it was said that even Nubian men cried.¹⁷⁹⁷

While Nubian cemeteries are simple, their graves show more decoration than Arab ones, like a couple of stones or a palm branch. Each grave is marked by a headstone or by a small clay stele. Some graves have an inscription bearing the name of the deceased, the date in the western calendar and possibly also in the Islamic one, followed by a short verse from the *Qur'ān*. A few graves have a bowl that can be filled with grains or rice, others show a patch of grass that people can tend by watering.¹⁷⁹⁸ Some graves have a water bowl

¹⁷⁹⁶ Mainly Mattokki mourners in Toshke 2012, p.c. The Fadijja Am Gamal (p.c., in YASSER OSMAN 1990: 198) puts the pre-*hijra* mourning period even longer: “In the beginning, the mourning used to last for fifteen days.”

LILA ABU-LUGHOD 2006: 537, writes similarly about the Awlad ‘Ali Bedouin society: “No one laments alone. But the community that lamenting ... creates and affirms is one of particular relationships between pairs: pairs of mourners and pairs of living and dead.”

¹⁷⁹⁷ Sara Muḥammad 2006, p.c.; Aḥmad ‘Uthmān 2019, p.c.

¹⁷⁹⁸ That is an old custom. MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994 remembers his mother saying: in the 1930s “... we placed green palm fronds on the grave and scattered seeds on it

enabling birds to drink from, considered a good deed and counted on behalf of the deceased. A more recent development is that headstones, signs, bowls, palm branches and patches of grass are considered forbidden (*harām*) by followers of *al-Anṣār al-Sunna* and Salafi teachings, leaving many graves bare.

A30.1 ¹⁷⁹⁹ *TENNE ἸΩΡΑΝ, ΩΕΡΚΙ ΕΤΤΑΡ ΕΜΟΥΝ.*

tenne iiwran, weerki ettar emun.

tenne iiw-r-an weer=gi ettar e-mun
again forget-NEUT-3PL one=ACC bring be-NEG

Again, they forget [a disaster that happened], so that it does not bring [another] one.

⇒ May the Nile flood not return so soon.

⇒ May we be prevented from poverty/extreme weather conditions.

A30.2 ¹⁸⁰⁰ *ΟΥΓΩΥΝ ΜΙΛΛΙ ΑΣΑΛΓΙ ΚΩΜΟΥΝ.*

uguun milli asalgi koomun.

uguu=n milli asalgi koor-mun
night=GEN evil tomorrow have-NEG

The evil of the night does not have a tomorrow.

⇒ When someone is ill visit that person straight away.

⇒ When someone dies you should not wait until the next morning to visit the mourners.

A30.3 ¹⁸⁰¹ *TOMBEΔ, ΚΩΛ ΤΕΝΝ ἌΝ ΒΑCΙΡΟΥΝ.*

tombed, kool tenn aan basiirun.

and around it. Then we filled that clay jar with water.” Further information from ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Ḥāzīm 2015, p.c.

¹⁷⁹⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 130); co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

¹⁸⁰⁰ From AḤMAD SĀTI, Buunaarti; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood.

¹⁸⁰¹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 119; and 2016: proverb 117); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Kamal Hussein.

tombi-ed kool tenn aa-n basiir-un
 brake-PFV alone 3SG:POSSself-GEN healer-COP
 Having broken [a bone], he alone is himself the healer.

⇒ The sick person knows best what makes him better.

A30.4 ¹⁸⁰² *ΑΡΑΒ ΔΕΡΕΒ, ΚΑΝΔΙ ΜΕΡΕΔ, ΓΟΥΤΡᾶΝΝ ΙΡΙC.*

arab jereb, kandi mered, gutraann iris.

arab jereb kandi mer-ed gutraan=n iris
 Arab skin.disease knife cut-PFV tar=GEN odour

The Arab is [like] the skin disease, the cutting knife, the odour of tar.

⇒ Arabs are regarded as distasteful people.

A30.5 ¹⁸⁰³ *ΑΝΝ ΝΕΩΕΡΤΙ ΤῚΒ ΒΕΛΙΝ.*

ann newerti teeb belin.

ann newerti teeb bel-in
 1SG:POSS spirit TAM exit-3SG

My spirit is about to come out.

teeb as the first part of a converb construction describes an action that is about to happen. See also A13.7 variant.

⇒ My business does not run well.

After asking the owner of a shop at a long-distance bus station whether his business was running well, the proverb was said.

A30.6 ¹⁸⁰⁴ *ΟΔΔΙ ΒΟῶΥΛ ΒΙΩΔΑΝΤΕΝ ΑΓΓΑΡΕΓΙ ᾶΡ ΒΟῶΥΝ, ΑἶΓΟΝ ΔΟῶΥ
 ΝΑΛΕΔ ΕΛΚΟΜΟΥΝ.*

*oddi buul bishanten angaregi aar buun, aygon juu naled
 elkomun.*

¹⁸⁰² From Anonymous.

¹⁸⁰³ From Tāriq ‘Abd el-Latīf, Shaikh Shariif.

¹⁸⁰⁴ From Bashīr ‘Abdallah, Dibela; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Samira El-Melik-Ziadah.

oddi buu-il bishante=n angare=gi ...
 be.ill STAT-PTC:IPF old.mat=GEN sleeping.bench=ACC
aar buu-n ay=gon juur nal-ed el-ko-mun
 grab PROG-3SG 1SG=CO go see-PFV find-PRT1-NEG

The ill one grabs the sleeping bench of the old reed mat; and I went to see [him], yet did not find [him].

juu nal

It is most important to go and visit somebody ill.

⇒

Expression of regret that one cannot support someone else whose life is full of troubles or illnesses.

A30.7 ¹⁸⁰⁵ *ΟΔΔΙΑ ΔΙΙΕΛΓΙ ΔΟΓΙΝ.*

oddil diyelgi doogin.

oddi-il dii-el=gi doog-in
 be.ill-PTC:IPF die-PTC:PF=ACC kiss-3SG

The one who is ill kisses the one who died.

⇒

Illness is better than death.

⇒

Everyone has some gifts with which to support someone else.

⇒

The one who has hardly anything requests support from the one who has nothing.

variant

diyel oddilgi doogin.

The dead one kisses the ill one.

⇒

The case is hopeless.

variant

dii buul anyilgi doogin.

The dead one kisses the living one.

¹⁸⁰⁵ From ‘Abd al-Raūf, Old Dongola and the female relatives of Aḥmad Sulaymān, Imaani. Variants from Nemat Abdalrahman and AMNA MUŞTAFA who heard it from her mother Sharīfa.

A30.8 ¹⁸⁰⁶ ΔΙΪΔΡ ΟCСIN ΤΟΓΟΡ.

diyar ossin togoor.

diyar *ossi=n togoor-n*
 death foot=GEN under-COP

Death is under the foot.

⇒ Do good deeds as death may come any time.

⇒ Death is always present.

A30.9 ¹⁸⁰⁷ ΔΙΪΔΡ ΕΚΚΙ ΜΟΥΓΚΙΝ, ΔΟΥΛΚΑΝΕ ΕΚΚΙ ΜΟΥΓΜΟΥΝ.

diyar ekki mugkin, duulkane ekki mugmun.

diyar *er=gi mug-ki-n ...*
 death 2SG=ACC leave-COND-3SG
duul-kane er=gi mug-mun
 big-NR 2SG=ACC leave-NEG

When death leaves you, old age does not leave you.

⇒ You are very old.

A30.10 ¹⁸⁰⁸ ΟΡΚΑΤΤΙΝ ΟΥΛΟΥΓ ΤΕΡΙΓΟΥΝ.

onykattin ulug terigun.

ony-katti=n ulug terig-un
 weep-REPT=GEN ear deaf-COP

The ear of the weeping one [mourner] is deaf.

⇒ Anyone affected by a major disaster no longer understands the other person's problem.

variant *meewn ulug terigun.*

The ear of the pregnant [woman] is deaf.

¹⁸⁰⁶ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 45); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, Aḥmad Hamza, ‘Abdullahi ‘Uthmān.

¹⁸⁰⁷ From Kamal Hussein, Urbi.

¹⁸⁰⁸ From ḤĀMĪD KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 53); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; variant from Muṣṭafa Samiltood.

A30.11 ¹⁸⁰⁹ ΔΙΪΕΛ ΤΕΝΝ ΓΑΒΟΥΡΚΙ ΣΑΝΔΙΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

diyel tenn gaburki sandimunu.

dii-el tenn gabur=gi sandi-munu
die-PTC:PF 3SG:POSS grave=ACC be.afraid-NEG

The one who died is not afraid of the grave.

⇒ One cannot change a very difficult situation.

⇒ There is no solution.

A30.12 ¹⁸¹⁰ ΕΡ ΜΟΝΙΝ ΑΓΑΡΝ ΓΕΕΡΟ, ΕΡ ΔΙΜΟΥΝ.

er moonin agar=n geero, er diimun.

er moon-in agar=n geero er dii-mun
2SG reject-2SG place=GEN except 2SG die-NEG

Except at the place you reject, you do not die.

⇒ I receive what I do not want.

A30.13 ¹⁸¹¹ ΣΑΝΔΙ ΒΟΪΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΒΑΛ ΔΙΝ.

sandi buul, tenn baal diin.

sandi buu-il tenn baal dii-n
be.afraid STAT-PTC:IPF 3SG:POSS mind die-3SG

The fearful, his mind dies.

⇒ He is too afraid to travel by plane, travels by car instead and dies in a car accident.

M30.1 ¹⁸¹² ΔΪΕΛ ΩΕΡΩΕΚΙ ΝΑΛΙΓΙ

aayel weerweeki naligi

¹⁸⁰⁹ From ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood; co-investigated with Ḥisayn Hamza.

¹⁸¹⁰ From Khālīd Ḥajj, Lebeb; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Qādir Samiltood.

¹⁸¹¹ From ‘Abd al-Bāṣit Ḥāj, Shebatood; co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza.

¹⁸¹² From St22; co-investigated with Muḥammad Ṣubḥi / A. Goo-Grauer, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Thābit Zāki. The SCA idioms are from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverbs 490, 491 and 565.

aay-el weerwee=gi nal-i=gi
 live-PTC:PF one.another=ACC see-3SG=TMP:ADV
 when the living will see each other

⇒ Farewell, said before travelling far away.

SCA: .الحي بلاقي. – “The living [person] will meet.”

SCA: .الحي يشوف. – “The living [person] will see.”

SCA: .إللي يعيش يشوف. – “He who lives will see.”

ECA: .إللي يعيش ياما يشوف. – “He who lives will see.”

ECA: .مصير الحي يتلاقى. –

“The destiny of the living [person] is to meet.”

Due to rare work opportunities prior to the *hijra*, most male Nubians went to Egyptian cities or even outside of Egypt to find work. Life was full of departing friends never knowing if and when they would return. Its meaning is similar to M18.6, both said when departing.

M30.2 ¹⁸¹³ *annaï tōn kōyrelī, ann dogōr iā oycoōpa.*

annay toon kuureli, ann dogoor yaa usuura.

ann=nay toon kuur-el-i ...

1SG:POSS=AD from learn-PTC:PF-PL

anna dogoor aag usuu-r-a

1SG:POSS above PROG laugh-NEUT-3PL

Those who learnt from me, they laugh at me.

⇒ The rich and famous forget who they learnt from.

M30.3 ¹⁸¹⁴ *arabi jarabi.*

arabi jarabi.

¹⁸¹³ From Faḍl Aḥmad, Umbarakaab; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad.

¹⁸¹⁴ From Anonymous; co-investigated with two Mattokki speakers.

arab-i jarab-i

Arab-PL skin.disease-PL

Arabs [are like] skin diseases.

- ⇒ The skin of Arabs is dirtier than the skin of Nubians.
 ⇒ Ababda Arabs [resp. Arabs from Saudi Arabia] are regarded as distasteful people.

M30.4 ¹⁸¹⁵ *ΟΥΣΚΙΑ ΟΓΙΡΡΟ ἄ τᾶ, ΤΟΥΓΟΥΡΓΙΡΙΝ ΓῶΝ, ἄ ΝΟΓΙ.*

uskid ogirro aa taa, tugurgirin goon, aa nogi.

uskid *ogir=ro aag taar-Ø ...*

birth womb=LOC PROG come-3SG

tugur=gir-in goon aag nog-i

shroud=ALL-COP SUB PROG walk-3SG

The birth comes in the mother's womb,
 while he becomes covered in a shroud, he leaves.

St. transl.: He comes with the deliverance at birth and goes with the shroud.

tugur The corpse of a deceased person is wrapped in a simple white shroud.

- ⇒ Worldly possessions are temporary.
 ⇒ Be content with one *jallābiya*, you will not have more when you die.

SCA: الموت بسواي بين الغني و الفقير .
 “Death makes the rich and the poor equal.”

ECA: الموت مالوش كبير . – “No one can vanquish death.”

¹⁸¹⁵ From St72; the proverb is unknown by Mattokki research participants. Therefore, the given wording and its interpretation may not be fully correct. The SCA idiom is taken from SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 790.

M30.5 ¹⁸¹⁶ Ζῶλ Δῖκι, Τουγοϋρ Δῆβκι Κῶμνου.

zool diiki, tugur jeebki koomnu.

zool dii-ki tugur jeeb=gi koor-munu
 person die-COND shroud pocket=ACC have-NEG

When the person dies, the shroud does not have any pocket.

⇒ You love money too much.

M30.6 ¹⁸¹⁷ Διῶσελ Μαλλε Τουγοϋρκ ἄ ελι.

diyosel malle tugurk aa eli.

dii-os-el malle tugur=gi aag el-i
 die-PFV-PTC:PF all shroud=ACC PROG find-3SG

The one who has died, all find a shroud.

⇒ Everyone has to die.

⇒ Encouragement to someone who has difficulties and does not know how to overcome them.

⇒ Encouragement to a poor person who does not know how to pay the next bill.

M30.7 ¹⁸¹⁸ Δῖ Βῶυλινα Τουγοϋρκ ἄ ἄρεσσοϋ.

dii buulina tugurk aa aaressu.

dii buu-el-i=na tugur=gi ...
 die STAT-PTC:PF-PL=GEN shroud=ACC

aag aar-ed-s-u
 PROG take-PFV-PRT2-3SG

He has taken the shroud of the dead (PL).

⇒ He steals everything.

¹⁸¹⁶ From the female relatives of ‘Az al-Dīn Qāsim, Debood; co-investigated with Khālid Karār.

¹⁸¹⁷ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Thābit Zāki.

¹⁸¹⁸ From MEKKI MUḤAMMAD, Maharraga; co-investigated with ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Awad, Thābit Zāki.

⇒ He is an evil man.

M30.8 ¹⁸¹⁹ ΔΙΪΑΡΝΑΪ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥΓΟΥΡΚΙ ΤΑΛΒΕΣΑ.

diyarnay toon tugurki talbeesa.

diiar=nay toon *tugur*=gi talbee-s-a

death=AD from shroud=ACC request.LV-PRT2-3PL

They requested the shroud from the dead.

⇒ They have asked someone who does not have anything for something (e.g. money).

M30.9 ¹⁸²⁰ ΤΟΥΓΟΥΡΡΟ ΩΑΛΑ ΔΕΒΙ ΔΑΜΝΑ.

tugurro wala jeebi daamna.

tugur=ro wala jeeb-i daa-mun-a

shroud=LOC NEG pocket-PL be.present-NEG-3PL

In the shroud there are no pockets.

⇒ At death one cannot take anything along.

variant *tugur jeeb kinnima.*

The shroud is without a pocket.

variant *tugur jeebki koomnu.*

The shroud does not have a pocket.

M30.10 ¹⁸²¹ ΟΪΝΑ ΤΙΡΤΙ ΟΪΚΕΔ, ΤΕΚΚΟΔΟΝ ἄ ΟΪΡΑ.

oyna tirtii oyked, tekkodon aa oyra.

oy=na tirtii *oy*=ged ...

weep=GEN owner weep=CAUS

ter=godon aag *oy-r-a*

3SG=COM PROG weep-NEUT-3PL

¹⁸¹⁹ From Jabāli Ajīb, Toshke.

¹⁸²⁰ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; variants from MUḤAMMAD ṢUBḤI, Asmaa A. Kenawy.

¹⁸²¹ From St57; variants from Thābit Zāki, Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid, Ḥisayn Shellāli.

As the owner of weeping [the bereaved] weeps, they weep with him.

St. transl.: To the owner of the funeral, he weeps as the others weep with him.

oy At a funeral, a visitor weeps even for a person with whom he had hardly any relationship. The closest relatives have to join him.

⇒ He shares the same feelings as his fellow human beings: He cries at a funeral, he shows sadness toward a sick person, he is cheerful at a wedding.

⇒ Don't ask anyone to take care of your problems more than you do.

variant *diyelna tirtii oykin, tekkodon yaa oyra.*

If the owner of the dead weeps, they weep with him.

variant *oyna tirtiigi oytirkiru, aa oyra.*

If we cause the owner of weeping to weep, they weep.

variant *oyna tirtii oyki, argon tekkodon aa oyru.*

If the owner of the weeping weeps, we also weep with him.

M30.11 ¹⁸²² ΔΙΪΕΛ ΔΙΪΟΚΙΝ, ΩΪΪΒΙΪΟΓΙ ΙΪ̄ ΓΙΔΙΡΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

diyel diyoskin, wiybiyogi yaa gijirmunu.

dii-el **dii-os-ki-n** ...

die-PTC:PF die-PFV-COND-3SG:SUB

wiybiyo=gi *aag* *gijir-munu*

wailing=ACC PROG listen-NEG

When the one who died is dead, he does not hear the wailing.

wiybiyo is derived from *way* ('to cry'). The word itself is rarely remembered. Massenbach writes *bibîya* and *wiybîya*.¹⁸²³

⇒ He is not aware that others talk negatively about him.

¹⁸²² From Thābit Zāki, Umbarakaab; variant from 'Abd al-Raḥman 'Awaḍ. Like him, Khālid Karār said *bibiye*.

¹⁸²³ MASSENBAACH 1933: 152.

variant *diyarked tenn bibiiyegi yaa gijirmunu.*

[The one] with death, he does not hear his wailing.

The proverb can be said in the following situation: A believes that he has lent B money. After some time, A asks B to return the money. B denies having borrowed the money. He says the proverb as a kind of oath that he did not receive the money.

M30.12 ¹⁸²⁴ Ζ᾽ΟΛ ΓΑΡΡΙ ἄ ΔΙΜΟΥΝΟΥ.

zool garri aa diimunu.

zool garri aag dii-munu

person evil PROG die-NEG

The evil person does not die.

⇒ He was a good person and he has passed away. I am very sorry about that.

4.31. God

Already in medieval Nubia “Faith and confession in one God are fundamental to the Nubian church.”¹⁸²⁵ When Nubians adopted Sufi Islam, that did not change. Some Sufi rites that honour mystics evolved from the veneration of Christian saints.¹⁸²⁶ Until today the cross has remained a symbol of protection; it is found on some storage containers in the Burgeg area in the Dongola Reach.

In the early 19th century a traveller to Nubia writes: “The only prayer known ... is the exclamation of Allahu akbar!”¹⁸²⁷ Shortly before the *hijra*,

¹⁸²⁴ From Ramaḍān Muḥammad, Allaagi; Thābit Zāki replaces *garri* by *milli* having the same meaning.

¹⁸²⁵ WERNER 2013: 403; in the German original: “Der Glaube und das Bekenntnis zum einen Gott sind für die nubische Kirche grundlegend.”

¹⁸²⁶ ABDEL HALIM SABBAR 2017: without page number.

¹⁸²⁷ BURCKHARDT 1819: 148. It is unlikely that Burckhardt had opportunity to observe Nubian women’s prayers.

it was said: “Nubians rarely made the hajj.”¹⁸²⁸ In conversations Nubians confirm that prior to the *hijra* and finding work on the Arabian Peninsula, official Islam was far less influential. Still, many Nubians feel that God is with them and express it accordingly, as when interpreting the mainly peaceful January 25, 2011 revolution in Egypt as being brought by God.¹⁸²⁹

In African proverbs, Okeke Onyeka Augustine from Tanzania expects “God talk”, as is found among the proverbs of the Kasena of Burkina Faso, the Jula and the Igbo, both from the Côte d’Ivoire.¹⁸³⁰ Friedemann W. Golka narrows down this statement:

But why are [proverb] groups VI and VII (‘God and man’, and ‘The righteous and the wicked’) absent in Africa? (Isolated appearances can be attributed to Islamic influence.) – So it remains that – apart from issues surrounding sacrifices – proverbs have hardly ever contained any wisdom relating to religious rites and prayer.¹⁸³¹

This is similar to Armenian where one finds a “consistent removal [of] God and religious connotations from the proverbs”.¹⁸³²

Ruth Finnegan has perhaps clarified the difference between the statements of Augustine and Golka. She puts it down to geographical locations:

... in most Bantu proverbs there are few references to religion; this contrasts with West Africa where this topic is fairly frequent, particularly among Muslim peoples such as the Hausa and Fulani.¹⁸³³

¹⁸²⁸ HERZOG 1957a: 175; in the German original: “Nubier machten selten die hajj.”

¹⁸²⁹ As one Mattokki Nubian 2012+2019, p.c.

¹⁸³⁰ HEWER 2000: 119: “[r]eligion also is a common focus of proverbs, with frequent mention of the creator God.” The Kasena are also known as Kasem.

GOERLING 1987; especially the chapter on ‘The Jula Concept of a good man’.

OHA 1998: 88 about the Igbo. Oha is from Côte d’Ivoire.

¹⁸³¹ GOLKA 1999; in English. And GOLKA 1994: 63; in the German original: “So wird es wohl doch dabei bleiben, daß außer in der Opferpolemik sich die Spruchweisheit kaum mit Gottesdienst und Gebet befasst hat.”

¹⁸³² HAGOPIAN 2008: 33.

¹⁸³³ FINNEGAN 1970: 404. Unlike Finnegan’s quote suggests, Augustine stems from a Bantu-speaking area.

In Andaandi and Mattokki one finds only a few proverbs literally speaking of *Arti*, God, a term also denoting the Creator God.¹⁸³⁴ These are mainly prayer or praise formulas, or advice about praying. Another term is *Mowla/Mowlay*, an ancient Arabic word for the Lord God said by both Arab Christians and Muslims, as in the 19th century van Dyke translation Arabic Bible, also by other African Muslim ethnicities like the Masalit in Western Sudan and Chad. In the northern Dongola Reach the Nobiin word *Noor* (God) was also in use.¹⁸³⁵

One Mattokki proverb (M20.2) but no Andaandi proverb mentions a sacrifice (*gojir*).¹⁸³⁶ Only two Andaandi proverbs have specific Islamic terminology (*goraan* ‘*Qur’ān*’, *imaam* ‘imam, prayer leader’, and *wadu* ‘Islamic cleansing ritual’); one could add Andaandi proverbs A1.16 and A8.3 where not a specific word but the phrasing relates to Islam. Proverb M26.3 mentions the *fegiir* (‘Muslim saint or prayer leader’). Any Sudanese proverb regarded by Salwa Ahmed as openly contradicting Islam or openly confirming it¹⁸³⁷ is not found in Andaandi or Mattokki.

It can be assumed that Hāmīd Khabīr, as a devout Muslim, did not miss proverbs relating to transcendental issues. Therefore, there may be other reasons for the limited number of proverbs with ‘God talk’: Maybe until recently some Nubians worshipped God less ritualistically yet with their hearts;¹⁸³⁸ maybe some Nubians were afraid of mentioning God’s name; or maybe again some Nubians, especially men, were more interested in the worldly aspects of Islam.

Has a dichotomy in men’s and women’s religious observance restricted the development of proverbs about God? Before World War I the German

¹⁸³⁴ ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan 2022, p.c. It can be singular and plural (*artinci*). In Roman script I write *Arti* with a capital A, also all other names of God. Whereas before taking up work on the Arabian Peninsula Nubians used Indigenous terms denoting ‘God’, contemporary Nubians have mainly adopted the Arabic terms *Allah* or *Illah*.

¹⁸³⁵ *Mowla* in Masalit: Angela Prinz 2017, p.c.; ‘Awaḍ Ḥasan 2022, p.c.

¹⁸³⁶ In proverbs A22.38 and M24.2 *gojir* is an ‘animal for slaughter’ or ‘slaughtered animal’. Interpreting it as a sacrifice does not fit that particular context.

¹⁸³⁷ E.g. SALWA AHMED 2005: proverbs 47 and 55.

¹⁸³⁸ ‘Ali Aḥmad from Magaasir Island 2001, p.c.

anthropologist Schäfer wrote: “The Nubian women have no [formal] worship service”.¹⁸³⁹ The same was valid before and during the time of the *hijra*: “formal Islam ... was an explicitly male activity.”¹⁸⁴⁰ Yet a Nubian *imām* adds that women while mainly being excluded from mosque services practised a more informal faith. In the end, they were more attached to God and asked more from him.¹⁸⁴¹

How then are religious ideas conveyed in Nubian proverbs? Were Nubians able to speak about God without mentioning his name, as in some of the writings of the late German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer?

Or does the Arabic term *Allāh* (God) and the practice of formal Islam in the Arabic language lead to religious ideas, including ‘God talk’, being mainly expressed in Arabic, so that Nubian proverbs about God were first avoided and later forgotten?

To reach a conclusion, I return to the Nubian collector of proverbs, Ḥāmid Khabīr. He ascertains that while on the surface of a proverb religion may not be recognizable as it was practised less in public, the meaning of a proverb often speaks about religious aspects. Religion was understood as mercy, good neighbourliness and hospitality. Religion was between God and man.¹⁸⁴² Further ideas will be presented in the introduction of subchapter 5.7.

A31.1 ¹⁸⁴³ *ḍPTIP KOYṢ BŌYN!*
Artir kuj buun!

¹⁸³⁹ SCHÄFER 1935: 228; in the German original: “Die nubischen Frauen haben keinen Gottesdienst.” Data were collected before 1914.

¹⁸⁴⁰ CALLENDER 2010: 196.

¹⁸⁴¹ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2015, p.c. Informal religion implies folk Islamic practices.

¹⁸⁴² Also Walīd Ragab 2022, p.c. and Muḥammad Ibrāhīm 2022, p.c.

¹⁸⁴³ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007 and 2016: proverb 44); co-investigated with Mu‘amr al-Fīl, Muḥammad Ḥasan; variant from EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI. When pronouncing the converb construction *kuj buun* it is assimilated to *kujjuun*. Based on the orthography rules in EL-SHAFIE EL-GUZUULI and JAEGER 2012 each root is written separately.

Arti=r kuj buu-n
 God=LOC be.up STAT-3SG

It is God's duty!

kuj following a LOC denotes a social duty, obligation or responsibility.¹⁸⁴⁴

⇒ Don't worry! Trust God! He will help you.

⇒ Remember God for all the good he has provided.

⇒ Without exception, the Lord cares for everyone.

As modern Islam denies anthropomorphism where aspects of human anatomy are attributes to a deity, Ḥāmid Khabīr dates the proverb back to the Christian period as it assumes faith in one God, yet still uses pre-Islamic imagery.¹⁸⁴⁵

variant *Artir kuj buun.*

It is put on God.

⇒ Your fate/destiny is on *Allāh*.

The variant represents an Islamic concept where everything is predetermined, resulting in fatalism.

SCA: .الله كريم. – "God is generous."

A31.2 ¹⁸⁴⁶ *ἈΡΤΙΝΔΙ ΒΑΨΨΙΔΤΙ ΚΟΜΟΥΝΟΥΝ.*

Artindi banynyiidti koomunun.

Arti-ndi banynyiid=gi koor-munun

God-POSS talking=ACC have-NEG

There is no talking belonging to God.

⇒ With God there is no arguing.

¹⁸⁴⁴ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 130. KAMAL HUSSEIN and JAEGER 2022: 106-108.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Some definitions give anthropomorphism a wider scope, as SALISBURY 2007, where the term 'anthropomorphism' is extended to any non-human entity like animals or inanimate objects. I choose the stricter definition.

¹⁸⁴⁶ From ʿAbdullahi ʿUthmān, Irtide; co-investigated with Kamal Hussein.

- ⇒ One's fate, as an extraordinary Nile flood, has to be accepted.
Nubians know that it comes from God.
- ⇒ This command is from God.

A31.3 ¹⁸⁴⁷ *ΑΡΤΙ ΚΟΥΡΟΥΒΒΕΓΕΔ ΔΟΜΜΟΥΝ.*

Arti kurucceged jommun.

Arti kurucce=ged jom-mun

God whip=INS beat-NEG

God does not flog [strike with a whip].

- ⇒ God has his own means to punish a person.
- ⇒ God does not punish now but later.

variant *Arti kulaged jommun.*

God does not strike with a stone.

A31.4 ¹⁸⁴⁸ *ΑΡΤΙΝ ΑΜΟΥΡΡΟ ΖΑΓΕΝ ΒΟΥΡΟΥΓΟΝ ΒΑΝΙΝ.*

Artin amurro hagen burugon baanin.

Arti=n amur=ro hage=n buru=gon baan-in

God=GEN order=LOC toy=GEN girl=CO dance-3SG

In the order of God even the doll dances.

hagen buru is a doll made from three branches of reed and two thorns. One reed represents the body, two reeds both arms. They are kept together by one thorn while the second thorn represents the head.

- ⇒ Especially for God nothing is impossible.

variant *artindi hagen burugi baankiddin.*

It belongs to God to make the doll dance.

¹⁸⁴⁷ From MUḤAMMAD SHARĪF, Shebatood; also variant.

¹⁸⁴⁸ From EL-SHAFĪE EL-GUZUULI, Khannaag; variant from HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 201); co-investigated with Mu'amr al-Fīl. Hāmīd Khabīr received the proverb from Yāsīn Ḥīsēn's son (Surtood).

- A31.5** ¹⁸⁴⁹ *ω̄ο̄ ἀρτι, ἀλλο ω̄ᾶφο!*
woo Arti, addo waanyo!
woo Arti ay=ro waanye-o
 INT God 1SG=LOC be.without-IMP:POL:SG
 O God, take from me!
 ⇒ O God, remove the problem from me.

- A31.6** ¹⁸⁵⁰ *ΜΩΛΑ ΜΑΛΛΕΓΙ ΜΕΝ ΤΙΡΙΝ.*
Mowla mallegi men tirin.
Mowla malle=gi men tir-in
 Lord.God all=ACC DISC give2/3-3SG
 Indeed [really without exception], the Lord cares for all. –
 However, the Lord keeps on giving to all.
 habitual While it is not marked grammatically, implicitly it is present.
 ⇒ The Lord is the provider for all people.
 A further Andaandi prayer and praise about God is:¹⁸⁵¹

ἀρτι δ̄οῦλον. – ἀρτι δ̄ᾶν. – ἀρτι ἐκκι νᾶλιν.
Arti duulon. Arti daan. Arti ekki nalin.
 God is great. God is present. God protects you.

- A31.7** ¹⁸⁵² *ερ φᾶλλατα νᾶζᾶκκεδ σιγιδδικᾶττιν.*
er fellata nahakked sigiddikattin.
er fellata nahakked sigiddi-katti-n
 2SG Fellata like pray-REPT-2SG
 You pray a lot like a Fellata.

¹⁸⁴⁹ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2016: proverb 133); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza. The utterance is more a prayer than a wise saying.

¹⁸⁵⁰ From ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007: proverb 130; and 2016: proverb 128); co-investigated with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

¹⁸⁵¹ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.

¹⁸⁵² From Aḥmad Hamza, co-investigated with Nemat Abdalrahman.

fellata are inhabitants of West Africa who on their pilgrimage to Mecca or on their return stayed in the Sudan. They were regarded as especially pious.

⇒ You are very religious.

A31.8 ¹⁸⁵³ ΓΟΡᾶΝ ΚΟΨῶΨΚΙ ΚῸΜΟΥΝ.

goraan koshoooshi koomun.

goraan *koshooosh=gi* *koor-mun*

Qur'ān useless.date=ACC have-NEG

The *Qur'ān* does not have a useless date.

koshooosh is a kind of date that perishes before harvesting and therefore is useless.

⇒ Each Surah of the *Qur'ān* is useful, whether short or long.

In the average Nubian village old men sit patiently together and wait for the prayer times, yet cannot endure a long prayer. Hence, they prefer the recitation of a short Surah. It is said that once a young man recited a long Surah. In the end the old men scolded him saying this proverb.

A31.9 ¹⁸⁵⁴ ΔῸΥΒΑΝΕΓΙ ΙΜᾶΜ ΤᾶΝ ΓᾶΛ, ΤΕΝΝ ΩΔΔΟΥΓΙ ΜΕΡΚΟΝ.

duubanegi imaam taan gaal, tenn wadugi merkon.

duubanegi **imaam** *taar-n* *gaal* ...

just.now prayer.leader come-3SG SUB

tenn **wadu=gi** *mer-ko-n*

3SG:POSS ritual.ablution=ACC cut-PRT1-3SG

Just after the prayer leader had arrived, he lost his ritual ablution.

duubanegi consists of the Arabic word *yādōb*, meaning ‘just now’, and the Nubian TMP suffix *-gi*.

¹⁸⁵³ From ‘ABD AL-‘DĀ’IM ‘ANBAR 2016: 27.

¹⁸⁵⁴ From HĀMĪD KHABĪR (2016: proverb 150); co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza, Kamal Hussein. While HĀmĪd KHABĪR writes *te*, he does not mark the proverb as a question. It is only meaningful when the word after *gaal* is understood as *tenn*.

wadu is the Islamic ritual ablution before each of the five daily prayers. When after performing the ablution and before the prayer starts, one makes a fart, the ablution becomes invalid and has to be repeated.

⇒ After he had completed a task, he was told that everything he had done had been in vain.

The proverb can be voiced when a passenger has been waiting at the railway station for a train and on arrival can no longer find the ticket. He is prevented from boarding the train.

A31.10 ¹⁸⁵⁵ *ḡḡIP ḡḡIL, ḡḡĒMNOY.*

hijir aagil, hijeemnu.

hij=ir aag-il hijee-munu

pilgrimage=LOC stay-PTC:IPF perform.pilgrimage.LV-NEG

The one who stays at the place of the pilgrimage (i.e. Mecca) does not perform the pilgrimage.

hijir/hijee While the Arabic word has geminated *j*, in Andaandi it becomes non-geminated, as the voiced affricate is not geminated.

⇒ Although he is close by, he does not come.

⇒ He is from the Dongola Reach and has not visited Kerma.

M31.1 ¹⁸⁵⁶ *ILḡḡḡI ERIGKED ĪPḡḡ.*

Illahi erigked iirsa.

Illahi erig=ged iir-s-a

my.God reason=INS know-PRT2-3PL

(My) God knew by reason.

¹⁸⁵⁵ From Akashe Muḡammad, Magaasir Island.

¹⁸⁵⁶ From Maḡmūd Muḡammad, Toshke. The related prayer was remembered by A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c. While in M4.8. ‘goodness, generosity’ is written *xeer*, here it is *heer*, showing less Arabic influence due to A. Goo-Grauer having collected her data much earlier than me.

Illahi is used with the pluralis majestatis. Among contemporary Mattokki it replaces the Nubian lexeme *Arti*.

⇒ I cannot see it with my own eyes, but I am sure that God knows.

prayer *Illahi ennan heerki digriikir.*
(My) God may increase your goodness.

M31.2 ¹⁸⁵⁷ ΜΩΛΑΪ ΜΑΛΛΕΓΙ ῙΑ ΔΜΙΤΤΙΡΙ.

mowlay mallegi yaa amittiri.

mowlay malle=gi aag amid-tir-i

my.Lord all=ACC PROG show-2/3REC-3SG

My Lord gives you everything.

⇒ The Lord is the provider.

This prayer and blessing is especially said during a journey.

M31.3 ¹⁸⁵⁸ ΙΒΛῙΣΚΟΝ ΤΕΝΝΑ ΝΑΩΕΡΤΙΓΙ ΩΟΥΚΡΕ̄ΣΟΥ.

ibliiskon tenna nawertigi shukreesu.

ibliis=gon tenna nawerti=gi shukree-s-u

Satan=CO 3SG:POSS spirit=ACC thank.LV-PRT2-3SG

And Satan thanked himself.

⇒ He is proud of himself.

M31.4 ¹⁸⁵⁹ ΣΟΥΛΛΟΥΓΙ ΔΟΪ ΒΟΪ̄.

sullugi doy buu.

sullu=gi doy buu-Ø

ghost=ACC raise PROG-3SG

He raises a ghost.

⇒ You are not straight.

¹⁸⁵⁷ From Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ, Merwaw.

¹⁸⁵⁸ From Zīzī Şiyām, Tingaar.

¹⁸⁵⁹ From ‘ĀISHA ‘ABD AL-RĀZIQ, Jebel Togoog; co-investigated with Taha ‘Abdu Salīm. *nawerti* is a variant of *newerti*.

4.32. Andaandi Puns

While not being wise sayings or proverbs the following humorous tongue-twisters added by Ḥāmid Khabīr to his 2007 collection are worth translating. They are missing in the 2016 edition.

H131¹⁸⁶⁰ *ANN KOYΩΔAP KOYPOYΩN KOΩEP ΔĀ BŌYN.*
ann kushar kurushn kosher daa buun.
ann kushar ...
 1SG:POSSkey
kurush=n koshe=r daa buu-n
 kind.of.date=GEN <lower.part>=LOC be.present STAT-3SG
 My key is in the lower part of the *kurush* date palm.
koshe is the lower part of the date palm where the thorns are.

H132 *KOYPOY KAPPI KARKARIP ΔĀ BŌYN.*
kuru karri karkarir daa buun.
kuru karri karkar-ir daa buu-n
 turtledove female nest=LOC be.present STAT-3SG
 A female turtledove is sitting in the nest [made of date palm branches].

H133 *ANN WEL MĒΩ IN MALTI WAP.*
ann wel meew in malti war.
ann wel meew in malti war-in
 1SG:POSSdog pregnant DEM channel jump-3SG
 My pregnant dog jumps in/around the channel.

¹⁸⁶⁰ In this and the following subchapter, H stands as an abbreviation for ḤĀMID KHABĪR (2007), followed by the ‘proverb’ number in his book.

4.33. Andaandi Wordplays

The following rhyming wordplays taken from Ḥāmid Khabīr’s 2016 edition are not considered as proverbs or wise sayings by other Andaandi speakers. The listing is concluded by one wordplay from Abu Bakr Khayri.

H173 ¹⁸⁶¹ Γᾱ̄ω Cᾱ̄ω
gaaw saaw
gaaw saaw
 ascend mingle
 He ascends, he mingles.
 ⇒ He is doing well.

Example sentence: *gaaw saaw, aagin goon baajkon.* ‘He is not sleepy, he is not tired, he was writing [a book].’

H174 Ζᾱ̄ωΕ λᾱ̄ωΕ
haawe laawe
 <Both words are without meaning.>
 ⇒ He throws and strikes.

H177 Δᾀλῆ ΜᾀλεΝ
joolee moolen
 <Both words are without meaning.>
 ⇒ They are searching for something that was lost a long time ago.

H178 Cᾱ̄φΕ ωᾱ̄φΕ
saanye waanye
saanye waanye
 <without meaning> be.without
 ⇒ People are restless and searching for what has been lost.

¹⁸⁶¹ Co-investigated with Aḥmad Hamza and Ḥāmid Khabīr. As some of the words are without specific meaning they are not included in any dictionary.

- H194 *COYΔAPY ZΔΔAPY*
sudari hadari
sud-ar=i had-ar=i
 stumble-NR=PL <without meaning>-NR=PL
 ⇒ He forgot something important.
- H195 *COYΔMENIΛ ZΔΔMENIΛ.*
sudmenil hadmenil.
sud-men-il had-men-il
 stumble-NEG-PTC:IPF <without meaning>-NEG-PTC:IPF
 ⇒ Never mind, only God does no wrong.
- H198 *CŌȲNΔI ΛŌNΔI*
suundi loondi
 <Both words are without meaning.>
 ⇒ He attempts to find but does not.
- H208 *KĀΩE CĀΩKON.*
kaashe saawkon.
kaashe saaw-ko-n
 search mingle-PRT1-3SG
 He searched and mingled.
 ⇒ He is confused. – There is confusion.
- Abu Bakr *ΩΟΥΡΟΥΒ ΤΕ ΛΑΒΑΝΚΙΡῙΝ?*
shurub te labankiriin?
shurub te laban=kirii-n
 drink Q:PRED milk=SIM-COP
 Does he squeeze similar to the milk?
shurub (Ar. loanword ‘drink’) It sounds similar to the sound of milking
 a cow.
laban (Ar. loanword ‘milk’)

⇒ Squeezing like milking the milk.

4.34. Andaandi Words used by Wise Men

Also in his 2016 edition, Hāmid Khabīr lists some words that are integral in understanding Andaandi wisdom:

H196: *agroskatti* Someone who is always happy.¹⁸⁶²

H197: *akres* Evil-doer, villain.

H209: *irin tood* Child that behaves well; lit.: ‘child of the people’.¹⁸⁶³

H210:¹⁸⁶⁴ *ejjuwaad* is a male or female person known to be generous, to keep secrets, with a straight back (*jer*) and of *sutera*, incorporating the Nubian traits of steadfastness and incorruptibility. One’s good standing and skills are used to mediate between two disputing humans, finding a settlement and working toward reconciliation. *ju/juu* is derived from ‘to go’. The *ejjuwaad* is a ‘go-between’, an early kind of shuttle-diplomacy. Reconciliation is performed in a spirit of kindness and love. An *ejjuwaad* uses Nubian proverbs, Nubian jokes, and texts from the *Qur’ān*, paraphrased in Nubian. Texts from the *Qur’ān* are introduced with *Arti weekon* ‘God said’, quotations from the prophet with *ennebi weekon* ‘the prophet said’.

Both parties call an *ejjuwaad* as when money is not returned, sharing a date palm or a cow does not work out to everyone’s satisfaction, marital disputes, or any other struggle that should not become public. Except for the final verdict that is binding to both sides, an *ejjuwaad* does not talk about the issue.¹⁸⁶⁵

Frequently the final judgement includes an apology. One has to say:

¹⁸⁶² *agros* is a variant of *agres*.

¹⁸⁶³ Cf. the prayer in section 5.7.2.

¹⁸⁶⁴ While ARMBRUSTER (2010[1965]: 64) leaves out the *u*, it exists in HĀMID KHABĪR (2016: 103), I also hear it. Nubian *ejjuwaad* and Arabic *ajwād* have slightly different meanings. (Muḥammad Sharīf 2020, p.c.)

¹⁸⁶⁵ Cf. FERNEA and FERNEA 1991: 148; Abdel Halim Sabbar 2009, p.c.; Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; Sha‘bān Berber 2019, p.c.; Thourya Muḥammad 2017, p.c. Abdel Halim Sabbar and Aḥmad Hamza’s father were regularly called in as an *ejjuwaad*.

ENNA ጊገገ ለእን ለዐገዕገጃ.

enna haggi ann dogoorma.

Your right is above me.¹⁸⁶⁶

The preparation for becoming an *ejjuwaad* begins in childhood. Children who behave well are allowed to attend reconciliation meetings. Villagers sense who meets the requirements.

Once a Nubian is considered to be an *ejjuwaad* he or she has great influence and responsibility in the community. An *ejjuwaad* works without payment in order to be independent from the warring parties. Instead, he even pays the expenses and possibly even the settlement to bring about reconciliation. That is why someone who is not generous cannot become an *ejjuwaad*.¹⁸⁶⁷

Unlike the magistrate of a district or a village, the *umda*, an *ejjuwaad* cannot impose money fines or flogging as a verdict. If one side does not keep the agreement, shaming is the ultimate punishment.

There are a few similarities between the *ejjuwaad*'s task and that of the Nubian Sufi mystic and prayer leader, the *fegiir*.¹⁸⁶⁸ After the Friday prayer, the *fegiir* listens to the disputes, discusses them with those present and finds a solution. However, the *fegiir*'s mediation takes place in public. He is a mediator by virtue of his office, whereas an *ejjuwaad* is chosen by the warring parties.

H211: *ogjowwa* 'two men', a man who has twice the usual share of positive characteristics.

H212: *kaashaad* Someone who is slightly mad. Cf. *kaashe* 'to search'

H213: *shegatoora* Someone who joins a conversation and constantly interferes. Cf. *sheg* 'to pierce' and *too(r)* 'to enter'.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Thābit Zāki 2018, p.c. He is one of the few Mattokki who still remembers the concept of *ejjuwaad*. All the other information come from Andaandi speakers. Among the Mattokki an *ejjuwaad* is also a match-maker.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Hāmid Khabīr (2020, p.c.) gives as a real-life example: A husband and his wife living in Khartoum had a problem. The *ejjuwaad* went from Dongola to Khartoum, paying all the travel expenses himself. The problem was solved.

¹⁸⁶⁸ The *fegiir* is introduced in proverb M26.3.

H222: *saawel* Unclouded, a person without origin. It has a negative connotation. With no clouds, no rain can be expected. However, in Nubia rain is greeted with great joy, children even have specific songs when it is raining.

H223: *maadillee* There are two meanings:
positive: expression of joy, like when being reunited after a long time of absence;
negative: to be arrogant and belittle someone.

5. Analysis

The former chapter classified proverbs mainly according to their literal translations, rarely revealing clusters of ethical practices and Nubian moral agency. In this chapter I rearrange proverbs according to their interpretative plane and revisit them for a more in-depth analysis, keeping in mind the difficulties of “divergent meanings”¹⁸⁶⁹ that I am partly overcoming through noting different interpretations. Still, in most cases there will be more meanings and interpretations I am not aware of.

Proverbs tell us something about how a community should work and how it would like to be perceived. They are an ethnic ethics¹⁸⁷⁰ and establish and “control social behaviour”.¹⁸⁷¹ They offer a kind of precolonial “ethnic philosophy”, or a “peoples’ philosophy”.¹⁸⁷² They discuss matters of existence, knowledge, values, reason and mind in the context of specific sociocultural traits. Still, over-generalisation based on proverbs is to be avoided as “proverb studies looking for national character traits should be undertaken with much care.”¹⁸⁷³

Here I look at Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs that resemble each other, discover domains that are omitted, look at animals as metaphors, the season of *tuubar* when the river Nile is at its lowest, the creation of social justice, the overcoming of poverty, and the perception of negative behaviour. I will illuminate how a money economy is perceived to have changed Nubian values and character traits. Relationships between sacred texts and proverbs, proverbs applied to a changing environment, a summary of stylistic and internal features will complement this chapter.

¹⁸⁶⁹ As described in HUSSEIN 2005: 64. Also helpful are GRIGAS 1996 and KRIKMANN 2001: 9. As typologies based on proverb meanings are especially difficult, I do not attempt to establish one.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Cf. MADMAROVA, G., ROZYKOVA, M., ABYTOVA, G., IMASHEVA, G., KADYROVA, G., MURZAKULOVA, K., KYDYKEEVA, A., AITIEVA, S., SURKEEVA, D., and ABDULLAEVA, Z. 2021.

¹⁸⁷¹ SALWA AHMED 2005: 187.

¹⁸⁷² Cf. HORSTHEMKE 2015: 16; the Cameroonian Solange Mekamgoum 2021, p.c.

¹⁸⁷³ MIEDER 2004: 137.

In the following, besides the proverb number and the proverb itself, only relevant information is reiterated; morphological parsing and glossing may be looked up in chapter 4. The interpretative plane is repeated where necessary.

5.1. Similar Nubian Proverbs

A number of Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs are similar to each other or even identical, unsurprisingly, as their history and environment have common features. Until recently Andaandi and Mattokki were even considered variants of one language as discussed in subchapter 1.1. Here, I begin by comparing Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs where metaphors and meanings are similar, some of this possibly explained by language contact, followed by proverbs where different metaphors still lead to similar interpretations.

5.1.1. Similar metaphors and meanings

The metaphors in the following Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs show great similarity, due to a similar environment, or to a common source:

Andaandi proverb	Mattokki proverb
A1.12 <i>essi kutti ankin, welli tuubiran.</i> When the water [river] becomes shallow /descends, the dogs wade on/in it. ¹⁸⁷⁴	M1.13 <i>essi shugurki, weli tedder aa tuubira.</i>
A1.14 <i>kuukki tuubarro waandin.</i>	M1.18 <i>kuukki tuubarro aa biinee.</i> The men's skin disease appears in the 'wading'/tuubar season.
A1.15 <i>demiiren turugiriin.</i>	M1.19 <i>demiiran turugiriima.</i> He is similar to the [strong] wind of the Nile flood.
A3.3 <i>malti dolin, baa niimun.</i>	M3.4 <i>essi baaro aa jomna, teron jabir tallemeekin?</i>

¹⁸⁷⁴ The shameful meanings that were cited when eliciting A1.12 were not mentioned when discussing M1.13.

The channel wants [water], [otherwise] the [agricultural] plot does not drink. / Does the water reach the plot, if it does not go through a channel [first]?

A3.8 *essi aalir belmun.* M3.5 *essi aaligi maarosilgi,
waatigi bi juusu.*

The water does not come out at the high [place]. / The water that was not able [to go] the high [way], it went the low.

A4.1 *siltin togoon essi.* M4.1 *siltin togoor er ta me essi
me?*

Isn't it that under the chaff there is the water?

A4.2 *essin kuusir kiddin.* M4.5 *falgon essir aa kiddi.*
He drowns in a cup of water / in the water of the *falgo*.

A7.8 *hambu warrigi ollikirin.* M7.2 *ambu nawitte warrir
nuunig aag aawi.*

The doum palm causes shade in the distance. / Like the doum palm he makes shade in the distance.

A9.18 *hanugi kucceegmen goon,* M9.12 *hanugi egir meenin goon,
ossinci welengin.* *ossig aa walagi.*

Although he does not get up a donkey, ... / Although he rides a donkey, he shakes the legs.

A9.35 *gur digirkin, kandi digrii* M9.27 *gur digirkin, kandi aa
anin.* *digrii ani.*

When the bull falls, the knives become plentiful.

A10.4 *kuguj digrii kulgi* M10.9 *iskitte digrii aagki
waddimun.* *dollig aa goolmina.*

Many mice do not dig the hole. / When there are many mice, they do not dig a pit.

A10.5 *wel sumarkil,* M10.11 *wel turungeeged,
dungurki uskin.* *dugurki uskisu.*

The dog that is in a hurry gives/gave birth to a blind [poppy].

- A10.6 *ishare kus buulgi, welli malle gaanyiran.* M10.15 *kisib war buullo, wel aa ekki.*
 The clay vessel that was opened, all the dogs lick. / In the uncovered earthen bowl, the dog urinates.
- A13.1 *kaag accisin, tirti irigi nalkin, wariji.* M13.1 *ayya accisin, irrina guta aa sarki.*
 He whom the snake bit, when he sees a rope, he jumps each time. / [As] the snake had bitten him, he fears a piece of rope.
- A13.8 *essi meer buullo, elumi daa buuran.* M13.23 *essi meer buullo, elumi daa buura.*
 In the standing water, crocodiles are present.
- A13.18 *goorro toon ajingi oosin.* M13.35 *goorro toon des yaa belmunu.*
 He removes the skin ... / The fat does not come out from the ant.
- A15.1 *edkin, burun tineengi ed!* M15.1 *edkin, burun tineengi ed*
 When you marry, marry the daughter's mother!
- A15.3 *een kaan sablo tannan.* M15.2 *een kaana jabi tera.*
 The wife is [like] the large water trough / channel of the house.
- A16.6 *duulgi koomenil, duulgi jaanin.* M16.4 *duulgi koomenil, duulweerki jaan.*
 The one who does not have an elder person [relative], buys the elder person.
- A17.2 *ishkartin nibid dawil buun.* M17.1 *ishkartin nibid dawil buu.*
 The mat of the guest is always rolled up [ready].
- A18.1 *erwiis owwi kubki kiddigirin.* M18.1 *kub rayis owwikool, aa kiddosi.*
 Two captains cause the boat to sink. / The boat having two captains, it has sunk.

- A18.16 *daribked daalgi, kinisse shegmunu.* M18.3 *enna girir toon aa belmeeki, ekki kinisse aa shegirmunu.*

The thorn does not pierce [him] who is on the path. / If you do not come out from your way, the thorns do not pierce you.

- A19.19 *tooma men fangagi, hee, man in nelgi ekon.* M19.15 *nil habberkool nil owwikool dogoor usuusu.*

The one having few/one tooth laughed about the one having no/two teeth.

- A19.32 *tenn ii sowwedun.* M19.24 *ter beer buun goon, tenn ii essig aa nakkimnu.*

His hand has dried up. / Although he is satisfied, his hand does not drip water.

- A19.36 *sunti kusur toon belmun.* M19.28 *sutti koccir toon aa belmunu.*

The fingernail does not come out from the flesh / from the top.

- A19.37 *jerki kool, tuur jomkattimun.* M19.29 *jerki kool, tuun dogoor aa jomtakkimnu.*

Having a back, he is not punched in/above the stomach.

- A19.38 *tuur daa buul, nedemgi koomun.* M19.30 *tuur daa buulgi aa kobil daamnu.*

That which is inside, it does not have regret / ... is locked and not present [visible].

- A19.41 *enn guta kottikirgi, enn ossigi nekke!* M19.37 *enna gataann gedir, enn ossigi middee!*

As tall as your ... / Fitting to the cover, stretch out your leg!

- A22.23 *shibir ulug owwigi kool nafar owwi sekken.* M22.7 *shibir ulug owwi koolgi, owwi yaa injira.*

The [large] basket having two ears [handles], two people raise/carry it.

- A22.31 *kashshigi kaawirran, iig diin.* M22.12 *iindig aa kaashran goon, iig diyossu.*
 They collect the dried stalks, the fires goes out. / While they search for the fuel, the fire has died.
- A25.3 *kasirki kaased daal, malle ogijmun.* M25.2 *kasirked degil, malle ogijminu.*
 He who has wraps / covers [himself] with the turban around, not everybody is a man.
- A30.4 *arab jereb, kandi mered, gutraann iris.* M30.3 *arabi jarabi.*
 The Arab is [like] the skin disease, the cutting knife, the odour of tar. / Arabs [are like] skin diseases.
- A31.6 *mowla mallegi men tirin.* M31.2 *mowlay mallegi yaa amittiri.*
 The Lord is the provider for all people. / My Lord gives you everything.

This list consists of 33 Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs. That is less than 8% of all proverbs. Maybe other corresponding proverbs have been forgotten, or are only known in parts of the language area that I did not visit.

5.1.2. Similarity through language contact or borrowing

With the following three Andaandi and three Mattokki proverbs similarity in metaphors and meanings may be explained through related proverbs in Arabic. However, also the Arabic counterparts may originate from other languages:

- A9.5 *kam tenn kurunyi nalmun.* M9.5 *kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.*
 The camel does not see its hump/ the curve of its neck.
- A20.1 *banynyiidon dungiged ekin, kitterar nobren.* M20.1 *baynad dunguged ekin, kitterar teegar nobrema.*
 If/when talking is [like] silver, (staying) silence is [like] gold.

A22.6 *enn kaayon gezaazagi, tokkon nallijmen!* M22.3 *enna kaatu gazaaza en goon, minnay zooligi kulugen aa jomi?*

If your house is [made] of glass, just do not hit it! / ..., why do you strike the people with the stone?

The last pair of proverbs is expressed by a command in Andaandi and a question in Mattokki. The corresponding Arab proverbs are statements.

5.1.3. Similar meanings - yet different metaphors

Some Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs have closely related meanings, yet use different metaphors. Has only a selection of a previously larger corpus of proverbs been transmitted or related to me? Or do they reflect differences in environment? Or are they the outcome of creative and innovative dynamics due to the fast changing environments?¹⁸⁷⁵ I begin by comparing the general weight of some semantic domains. The following observations are not exhaustive yet may bring forth some obvious answers.

The number of Mattokki proverbs relating to the river Nile is higher than in Andaandi:

Semantic Domain	Andaandi prov.	Mattokki prov.
1: 'River'	17	22

That may illustrate why Egyptian Nubians found it so hard to leave their homeland near the river Nile at the time of the *hijra*, despite all the Egyptian government's promises. Even 60 years after the resettlement and living far away from the river, 'River' proverbs remain prominent.

In pre-*hijra* Lower Nubia agriculture was very restricted due to the low availability of fertile soil, in stark contrast to the Dongola Reach. While in post-*hijra* times the agricultural area increased, Mattokki farmers often rented their grounds to Southern Egyptians. This difference is reflected in the much higher number of Andaandi proverbs in these domains, even when taking into account the slightly higher number of proverbs and sayings in Andaandi (425) in comparison to Mattokki (376):

¹⁸⁷⁵ I thank Anne Storch for posing that question.

Semantic Domain	Andaandi prov.	Mattokki prov.
5: 'Agriculture: Farming'	17	7
6: 'Agriculture: Harvesting, Milling and Storing'	9	4
7: 'Agriculture: Date Palm'	13	8
Total	39	19

The lack of Mattokki proverbs taking metaphors from agriculture is made up for by a higher ratio of Mattokki proverbs using metaphors from the realm of animals:

Semantic Domain	Andaandi prov.	Mattokki prov.
9: 'Animals: Domestic'	44	34
10: 'Non-domesticated Animals in and around the House'	9	20
11: 'Animals: Birds'	8	7
12: 'Animals: Fish'	3	5
13: 'Animals Reg. as Dangerous'	18	36
Total	82	102

While the non-domesticated animal metaphors are nearly the same in Andaandi and Mattokki (cat, mouse, dog, and chameleon), with Mattokki adding the fly, in Mattokki each of them (except for the chameleon) occurs about twice as much as in Andaandi. The spider is listed in domain 11 'Animals: Birds', as the proverb relates it to a raven. It occurs only in Mattokki.

While Mattokki has a slightly higher number of different species of fish, the few occurrences are not sufficient to draw any conclusion.

Also, the dangerous animals metaphors are nearly the same (snake, scorpion, crocodile, hyena, fox, ant), with Andaandi adding the lion, and Mattokki the jackal and the termite. The significantly higher number of Mattokki proverbs in this domain is mainly explained by the greater amount of proverbs with the scorpion (12 in Mattokki, 3 in Andaandi) and the jackal (4 in Mattokki, none in Andaandi) as metaphors. The differences could be explained by the fact

that before the *hijra* many Mattokki houses were located right next to the desert, which made it more likely to encounter animals that preferred to live there. Also, children were more likely to run into the desert. In subchapter 5.3 I will return to animals as metaphors.

When proverbs talk about restrictions of human beings, Andaandi prefers metaphors from the realm of animals, Mattokki from agriculture:

Human beings are restricted:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>A9.3 <i>goor kalin, kamkotti anmun.</i>
The ant eats [a lot], it does not become as tall as the camel.</p> | <p>M5.3 <i>seringon aag, ille yaa anmunu.</i>
And barley remains [barley], it does not become wheat.</p> |
| <p>A11.1 <i>fooja kalin, kuru anmunun.</i>
The sparrow eats [a lot], it does not become a turtledove.</p> | |

Further advice is given in the following proverbs:

Times of need:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A7.2 <i>benti boorkin, timbesir tarkin.</i>
When the date palm collapses, it leans against its brother.</p> | <p>M19.41 <i>geew asillo yaa essi anmunu.</i>
Blood never becomes water.</p> |
| <p>A16.4 <i>angii, ay oobossi, en gaal, ay egecce buulgi, weetirkon.</i>
After my mother’s brother said “I turned over [lying on my face]”; – he answered him [ironically] “I am lying on my back.”</p> | <p>M25.6 <i>amaajee buul wirij buul weer dogoor digir toosu.</i>
The nearly naked one entered and fell over the naked one.</p> |
| <p>A23.9 <i>eron gasuweerki dolkin, tokkon fogir irjeen anelnar juumen, irjeen ekolnar juu!</i>
If you need something, just do not go to one who was poor and became rich, go to the one who has always been rich!</p> | |

In times of need, the first place to turn to is one's extended family, symbolised by 'blood'. However, the right person has to be discerned. He should neither be poor, nor newly rich.

Laziness:

A19.23 *gumurkool.*
[He is] Having a neck.

M9.15 *er juu taan bokon, hanun
nishshi bi beeri.*

A22.24 *gaalon attir buun
goon, essin eerked
diin.*

Until [by the time] you leave
and return, the donkey's horn
will have grown.

Although you are near
the [water] jar,
you died from thirst.

M22.4 *elekken bokon surun dogoor
aagi.*

Until now he is sitting on the
wall bench.

Regarding the last pair of proverbs (A22.24 and M22.4): Nowadays, the water jar (*gaalo/barraad*) that keeps water clean and cool is more common in the Dongola Reach, as in Southern Egypt faucets and refrigerators were introduced earlier. The Mattokki proverb refers to sitting on the wall bench during work time, not after sunset when they rest outside and chat with each other.

Impossible events:

A5.16 *kamkoro shukkikin,
korodton gaawin.*
When the dung sinks, and
the pebbles ascend.

M9.18 *alagiide hanu angalleegi
kalossu.*

Just now the donkey has
eaten [finished eating] the
white lupin.

A6.6 *noorti buun, turug juun
kulugi inded firringon.*
There is flour, the wind
has picked up the
millstone, and [it] flies.

M10.7 *saab tenn afficigi
kalmaa?*

Did the cat eat her
kittens?

While the Andaandi proverbs use metaphors from the realm of agriculture, the Mattokki proverbs use metaphors from the realm of animals, the opposite to proverbs describing human restrictions listed above.

Unreliability:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>A9.40 <i>bertin eewkiriin.</i>
He is similar to the tail of the goat.</p> | <p>M10.1 <i>saabki kusun dogoor haraskirsa.</i>
They caused the cat to watch over the meat.</p> |
| <p>A13.12 <i>eedigi te egediged iiwiran?</i>
Does one let the hyena shepherd with the sheep?</p> | |

Self-Assessment:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A22.7 <i>tinn daar ubarteweerki eski murtimenil, irin daar owwigi murtin.</i>
In his home he who is not able to control one cooking stone, in another house he controls two.</p> | <p>M22.26 <i>ittilleg aa nallan goon, gir bagid ussugi yaa nalmunu.</i>
Although they see the needle, sometimes they do not see the pole.</p> |
|---|---|

In the Dongola Reach in a few places the three cooking stones (*ubarte/ugree*) are still in use; in Egyptian Nubia I have not come across them; they were replaced by modern appliances. While the metaphor of cooking stones does not appear in any Mattokki proverb, metaphors of modern appliances have not replaced them.

A special case are A9.34 and M9.9 where the metaphors are very close:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>A9.34 <i>gur geele boodoskin, gur urumme duurminu.</i>
[Even] When the red bull has just [began to] run, the black bull cannot reach [it].</p> | <p>M9.9 <i>kaj urumme boodkin, kaj geele tekki duurminu.</i>
When the black horse runs, the red horse cannot reach it.</p> |
|---|--|

The proverbs differ in the stages they record: At the beginning, the fire ('red') is further ahead than the smoke ('black'), as in the Andaandi proverb. Later the smoke ('black') is ahead and cannot be reached anymore, as stated by the Mattokki proverb.

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of the section, it can be said that differences in the environment and to a lower degree points of time of changes in the environment, play a role in which metaphors are used.

5.2. Missing Semantic Domains and Metaphors

While some Nubians criticise Ḥāmid Khabīr for including proverbs whose disclosure violates the Nubian concept of *sutera*, such a disapproval demonstrates the comprehensiveness of his collection. Therefore, if a semantic domain or subdomain would be expected, yet is absent, it is more likely that metaphors were not taken from this domain than that Ḥāmid Khabīr would have excluded such proverbs. Here I list some such domains one might expect in a proverbs collection.

When in Nubia and speaking Arabic one frequently hears the words *sharaf* (honour), *takrīm* (honouring) and *ʿīb* (shame). Certain specifics of Nubian socio-cultural traits can be ascribed to the outworking of aspects of honour and shame: hospitality, the historic absence of jails in Nubia and its perceived security and peacefulness. These are mechanisms powerful enough to frequently overcome open conflict and shameful behaviour.¹⁸⁷⁶

Still, so far, no proverb whose literal meaning relates to honour and shame has been collected. That coincides with the term ‘honour’ in Andaandi and Mattokki being expressed by an Arabic loanword (*sharaf*). In Mattokki, an honourable person is designated as *aadel*. Its basic meaning is ‘good’, or ‘righteous’. Somebody being ashamed or shamed is expressed by *sowwi*, literally meaning ‘to get dry’. In contrast to honour, there is a Nubian term for ‘shame’: *ooddi/jirsa* (see M13.36), also meaning ‘scandal’.

Ḥāmid Khabīr explains that the term “honour is not important for us [Nubians] because we are honourable people.” To him “the man is the king of the house. Therefore, the man of another house is also treated as a king. But this does not need to be expressed verbally.”¹⁸⁷⁷ That is why a specific Nubian term for ‘honour’ is not necessary.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Some researchers question the honour-shame dichotomy, as COZENS and OCHS 2019: 238. Cf. section 2.3.6.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Ḥāmid Khabīr 2020, p.c. No specific mentioning of women was made.

According to the concept of *sutera*, shame needs to be hidden. Being undressed is a typical metaphor for shame.¹⁸⁷⁸ In the Nubian proverbs shame is conveyed indirectly, as in:

A10.6 *ishare kus buulgi, welli malle gaanyiran.*

The opened clay vessel, all the dogs lick [it].

⇒ She is an immoral woman who walks on her own at night.

⇒ She has a bad reputation and will end up promiscuous.

M10.15 *kisib war buullo, wel aa ekki.*

In the uncovered earthen bowl, the dog urinates [in it].

⇒ She is an immoral woman that other men go with.

M25.5 *aagin goon wirijkin, teebin goon wirijminu!*

If you sit naked, do not stand naked!

⇒ When you do something shameful, don't do it in public.

In proverbs A10.6 and M10.15 it is the vessel/bowl that is uncovered and thereby compared to a naked/shameful person.

In the following semantic domains one may expect some additional metaphors, yet so far they are missing:

Semantic domain 1 'River': **Angels of the Nile** were closely related to the river Nile. Local advice about these angels might have helped to live in better harmony with the river Nile and its environment where "climate change threatens [Nubian] cultural connections to the river even more."¹⁸⁷⁹

Semantic domain 7 'Agriculture: Date Palm': **Home-made spirits** distilled from dates.¹⁸⁸⁰ Either Nubians have ceased to use such a metaphor, as nowadays drinking home-made spirits/alcohol is considered un-Islamic, or there never has been a proverb. The latter assumption is supported by the non-

¹⁸⁷⁸ KÖVECSES 1998: 137.

¹⁸⁷⁹ OMNIA SAED 2023. It majors on the Fadijja artist Fikry Kashef who was born before the *hijra* and still has preserved some knowledge about the angels of the Nile. – MASSENBAACH (1962: 1-8) has some oral Mattokki stories about angels of the Nile.

¹⁸⁸⁰ MASSENBAACH (1962: 129-130) collected a description of its manufacture.

existence of any Nubian lexeme for home-made spirits,¹⁸⁸¹ such as the millet beer that is only known by the Arabic lexeme *marīsa*.

Semantic domain 8 ‘Other Plants’: **Broad beans** (Ar. loanword *fūl*). While nowadays it is the most frequent contemporary staple next to bread, Nubians rarely cultivated broad beans until a few decades ago.¹⁸⁸²

Semantic domain 13 ‘Animals Regarded as Dangerous’: **Locusts** (*banga/magga*) destroy every now and then the whole Nubian harvest and caused Nubians to leave their homes.¹⁸⁸³ The tiny **mosquito** (*nimitte*) is especially a nuisance in the Dongola Reach during low tide due to its sheer numbers. Petroglyphs show that the **elephant** (*angal*, Andaandi only) existed in Nubia in ancient times. The **hippopotamus** (*erid, essin tii*) suffered the same fate.

Semantic domain 14 ‘Kinship: Children and Parents’: **Twins** (*barsi*) and **grandparents**. The spirit of twins was believed to be able to enter a cat and, like a cat, considered spooky.¹⁸⁸⁴ – In spite of grandparents being depicted very positively,¹⁸⁸⁵ even in the interpretative frame they only occur once (A7.5).

Semantic domains 14 and 15: **Orphans** and **widows** do not occur literally in Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs. In general orphans (Ar. loanword *yetīm*) and widows¹⁸⁸⁶ were looked after in the closely-knit Nubian community.

Semantic domain 15 ‘Kinship: Women and Wives’: **Prostitutes**.

Semantic domain 19 ‘Body Parts’: **Bodily excretions** and **effluvia** may be ‘objects of taboo at least partly because they [are] ambiguous in so far as they

¹⁸⁸¹ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2014, p.c.

¹⁸⁸² RYAN and JAEGER et al 2021: 31; also A. Goo-Grauer 2022, p.c.

¹⁸⁸³ As experienced by Samuel Ali Hissein in 1869 (SCHÄFER 1917: 33). Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (2023, p.c.) assumes it to occur about every 33 years.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Şabri Aḥmad 2023, p.c.; MASSENBACH 1929: 177.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Cf. ‘grandmother’ in semantic domain 14.

¹⁸⁸⁶ There is no specific Nubian lexeme. Instead, it is said *id dii buuln een* ‘the woman whose husband has died’.

are part of a person's body and at the same time separate from him."¹⁸⁸⁷ Alternatively they may be considered as impure.

Semantic domain 22 'House and Household': Except for the bed (*angaree*) any kind of **furniture**, such as the wooden bench with backrest (*dakka/dikke* or variant *dikka*), is absent from the proverbs. That could be due to the fact that most of the furniture was only being introduced to Nubia during the last 150 years. In contrast to the knife, the **sword** (*siwid*) does not occur in the proverbs. The same goes for the **cutlery** that was available prior to the *hijra*, such as the large wooden spoon used for scooping, and the small wooden spoon for eating.¹⁸⁸⁸

Semantic domains 23 'Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both' and 26 'Work': Among Nubians, **trade** (Ar. loanword *tijāra*) was a disgrace (*'īb*), and therefore as much as possible avoided. The Arabic language, on the other hand, has been associated with money, finance and trade, as many parts of Africa north of the equator were entered by Arab traders before Western colonial powers. Due to the increasing influence of the Arab language and culture in contemporary Nubia this has changed, and Nubians have also become traders, among them the *jallāba*.¹⁸⁸⁹

Semantic domain 28 'World and Cosmos': **Weather forecasts**. While weather conditions in Nubia vary less than in Central Europe with its weather lore ('Bauernweisheit' in German), a farmer may nevertheless be tempted to predict the kind of flood to be expected: A medium Nile flood creates a better yield than too much or too little flooding.

Semantic domain 29 'Celebrations': One would have expected references to the wedding's **henna** (*henna/kofree*) **ceremony**. **Music** and **musical instruments** such as the Nubian hand drums (*atum* and *taar*), larger drums (*dalluuka* and *nuggaara*) and the Nubian lyre (*kisir*)¹⁸⁹⁰ could have provided

¹⁸⁸⁷ HANSFORD 2011: 55; based on LEACH 1964 *Anthropological aspects of language*. ALLAN and BURRIDGE (2006: 1) observe similarly.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Sha'bān Berber 2019, p.c.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Hāmid Khabīr 2020, p.c.

¹⁸⁹⁰ HOMEYER (2020: 70+111+93) in her master thesis explains the *taar*, *nuggara* and *kisir*, however, with different spelling. The *nuggaara* is a large drum with its

further metaphors. Before the *hijra* at the annual *mūlid* where the village saint was celebrated dancing was going on, too.¹⁸⁹¹ **Circumcision** as practised on boys and girls¹⁸⁹² and the *zaar* ceremony, still practised, are also missing.

Semantic domain 30 ‘Life, Calamities and Death’: **Madness** occurs only in Mattokki proverbs in other domains: M21.12 and M21.13. Nubian research participants insist that serious **crimes** are a rare occurrence.¹⁸⁹³ That could be due to the principle of *sutera* that prevents any hint of criminality in Nubia from leaking out.

Semantic domain 31 ‘God’: The near absence of **Islamic terminology** and **symbols** in Nubian proverbs is surprising as Nubians have a Muslim history dating back more than 600 years. It may be due to Nubians not feeling the necessity to stress their Islamic identity. Or metaphors may be absent due to Islam’s sacredness. The **village sheikh and prayer leader** (*fegiir*) whose blessings (Ar. *baraka*) were so much desired occurs once in Mattokki, never in Andaandi. Sacred places such as the **sheikh’s tombs**, so dominant in Nubian ceremonial life,¹⁸⁹⁴ are absent. Proverbs referring to a *jinn*, an **evil spirit** or a demon (*dahal/newerti nijis*), have not been found so far. That coincides with pre-*hijra* Mattokki not mentioning them explicitly.¹⁸⁹⁵ The omission of proverbs used in **ancestral worship** is not unexpected. Officially Nubians have not been worshipping their ancestors or minor deities for more than 1000 years. Also, with the building of the Aswan High Dam and the *hijra* the ancestral graves were lost forever.

drumhead from cow’s leather. Among the Mattokki, the musicians from Umbarakaab are known for their mastery of the *nuggaara*. The *kisir* is a long-necked, stringed instrument resembling the mandolin, with five strings.

¹⁸⁹¹ GERSTER 1964: 189. Maybe proverbs became non-existent after the *hijra* as most *mūlids* ceased to be observed or became insignificant. (Faṭḥi ‘Abd al-Sayid 2018, p.c.; Muḥi ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ 2018, p.c.)

¹⁸⁹² JUNKER and SCHÄFER (1921: 62-64) describes a circumcision.

¹⁸⁹³ Ḥāmid Khabīr (2020, p.c.) refers to reading a report about crime in the Northern State (Sudan). During the period from 1930 to 1970 there were allegedly 10 murders in the Northern State, all of them committed by Arabs.

¹⁸⁹⁴ As described in KENNEDY 2005[1978].

¹⁸⁹⁵ A. Goo-Grauer 2022, p.c.

It is difficult to assign some topics to existing semantic domains:

Wisdom is referenced in M1.4, A16.6, and M16.4. Teaching and training is referred to in A7.5. Neither Andaandi nor Mattokki has a lexeme for wisdom. No proverb is specific to **court** cases. Only one proverb (A9.7) was explained as being used at court. Reasons for underrepresentation could be that Arabic has become the court language, that literacy at court became more important than orality,¹⁸⁹⁶ or that lawsuits are dealt with based on Islamic sharia law.

Nubian **history** is not referenced: Mattokki Nubians went through a traumatic process of multiple dam buildings and heightenings, and compulsory relocations, culminating in the *hijra*. Both, Nubians from the Dongola Reach and from Lower Nubia, experienced urbanisation.

War and quarrels not occurring comes as no surprise as Nubians represent themselves as peaceful people. That contradicts observations of one traveller in the early 19th century: “Disputes and sanguinary quarrels often take place ... between the inhabitants of neighbouring villages.”¹⁸⁹⁷ Also, Egyptian Nubians were active in the Egyptian army in the 1967 and 1973 wars. Sudanese Nubians have been involved in top positions in the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) fighting against uprisings in other parts of the Sudan.

So far, I am not able to state whether these missing semantic domains are a result of avoidance or erasure. In my conversations I experience that most of these topics are talked about. That is why altogether I lean toward avoidance.

5.3. Animals as Metaphors

Animals are a source for creating metaphors as they show many similarities to human beings. Animals and their metaphorical usage differ from country to country. For Sudanese Arabic proverbs a “weak and cowardly man is a

¹⁸⁹⁶ SPAULDING (2014: 152) explains: “One may interpret the available evidence to imply that during the middle decades of the eighteenth century the comparatively new practice of authoritative written documentation in Arabic had not only taken root in Sinnar, but was also gaining ground at the expense of older more democratic vernacular traditions of adjudication in which oral testimony of local elders carried weight.”

¹⁸⁹⁷ BURCKHARDT 1819: 138.

hyena, a malicious person is a fox and a patient man is described as a camel.”¹⁸⁹⁸

ARVO KRIKMANN discusses some issues of animal identity in proverbs. In order to provide another outlook on Nubian proverbs I revisit the semantic domain of animals applying his classification.¹⁸⁹⁹ Proverbs with pure animal identity are:

A9.36 *gur tenn nishshigi maamun.*

The bull is unable [not to carry] its horn.

M9.5 *kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.*

The camel does not see the curve of its neck.

Further Andaandi examples are: A9.1 A9.13 A9.42 A10.7 A10.9 A11.4 A11.6.

Further Mattokki examples are: M9.15 M9.16 M10.7.

Some animal proverbs describe relationships between humans and animals, as in ‘Animals Regarded as Dangerous’ (semantic domain 13) where a metaphor signifies something dangerous. The following list of human-animal relationship proverbs includes only proverbs with where the human is made explicit, not just referred to by a pronoun. Note that in Mattokki an explicit human-animal relationship is much less frequent:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>human – animal relation</u>	<u>translation</u>
A9.4	<i>nogo – kam</i>	female slave – camel
A9.10	<i>adem uus – kam</i>	bad human – camel
A9.26	<i>een – hanu</i>	woman – donkey
A10.8	<i>adem – welli</i>	human – dogs
A11.6	<i>buru – karmal</i>	girl – oriental turtledove
A13.1	<i>tirti – kaag</i>	owner – snake
A13.5	<i>iri – icciin</i>	people – scorpion

¹⁸⁹⁸ SALWA AHMED 2005: 30. For the fox, cf. YASSER OSMAN 1990: 157: “The fox had cunning and enjoyed easy childbirth; he therefore served as a birth amulet.”

¹⁸⁹⁹ KRIKMANN 2001: 13-17.

<u>proverb</u>	<u>human – animal relation</u>	<u>translation</u>
A13.17	<i>agar – goor</i>	place (on the skin) – ant
M13.4	<i>kaag – Arab</i>	snake – Arab

Some animal proverbs concern the relationship between two different species of animals, such as a killer and its victim, metaphorical for strong and weak. This category provides further insight into the perception of the Dongolawi and Mattokki animal kingdom:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>animals</u>	<u>translation</u>	<u>relationship</u>
A9.27	<i>tii – kaj</i>	cow – horse	weak producer – strong user
A9.33	<i>tii – gur</i>	cow – bull	both strong
A11.1 + A11.2	<i>fooja – kuru</i>	sparrow – turtledove	tiny – large
A12.3	<i>kuur – dabis</i>	sheatfish – mullet	very powerful – powerful
A13.3	<i>kaag – icciin</i>	snake – scorpion	similarly dangerous
A13.12	<i>eedi – eged</i>	hyena – sheep	strong – weak/innocent
M9.4	<i>goor – kam</i>	ant – camel	reversing the weak – strong paradigm
M9.6	<i>kaj – ayya</i>	horse – snake	both strong, constantly fighting
M9.7	<i>hanu – kaj</i>	donkey – horse	less – more valuable
M9.25	<i>tii – waal</i>	cow – calf	action – result
M11.5	<i>koog – kuraab</i>	raven– spider	both strong, constant fighting
M13.5	<i>icciin – kakkee</i>	scorpion – young scorpion	bad – worse
M13.25	<i>jeleg – darbad</i>	jackal – chicken	strong – weak
M13.27	<i>jeleg – urti</i>	jackal – domestic animal	strong – weak

<u>proverb</u>	<u>animals</u>	<u>translation</u>	<u>relationship</u>
M13.28	<i>jeleg – wel</i>	old jackal – dog	weak that was strong – strong

Proverbs relating animals toward their environment are common. Some of the relationships are universal, like ‘cat’ and ‘milk’:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>animal – matter relation</u>	<u>translation</u>
A1.12	<i>wel – essi</i>	dog – water
A9.14	<i>kaj – gutaar</i>	horse – sand storm
A9.28	<i>tii – kude</i>	cow – pen
A9.29	<i>tii – tiinbaab</i>	cow – pearl
A9.35+ M9.27	<i>gur – kandi</i>	bull – knife
A9.44	<i>dummade – tuddi</i>	chicken – clay wall
A10.1	<i>saab – icci</i>	cat – milk
A10.4	<i>kuguj – kul</i>	mouse – hole
A10.6	<i>wel – ishare</i>	dog – clay vessel
A11.3	<i>fooja – jowwi</i>	sparrow – acacia tree
A13.8+ M13.23	<i>elum – essi</i>	crocodile – water
M9.3	<i>kam – irri</i>	camel – bridle
M9.11	<i>hanu – degir</i>	donkey – saddle
M9.14	<i>hanu – mitar</i>	donkey – well
M9.24	<i>tii – irri</i>	cow – rope
M9.31	<i>darbad – gaskatti</i>	chicken – egg
M10.1	<i>saab – kusu</i>	cat – meat
M10.3	<i>saab – uyi</i>	cat – excrement
M10.9	<i>iskitte – dolli</i>	mouse – pit
M13.1	<i>ayya – irri</i>	snake – rope
M13.17+M13.22	<i>elum – essi duul</i>	crocodile – river

Finally, I list metaphorical meanings of animals that one meets in Nubia, sorted by semantic domain. I exclude animals mentioned in the table about

relationships between two different species of animals. I add animals that are used as a simile and mark them accordingly:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>metaphor</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A9.4	camel	high position
A9.5	camel's hump	mistake, wrongdoing
A9.35+A9.36 +M9.27	bull	strength, influence
M9.2	domestic animal	marriage partner
M9.25	calf	good result
M9.31+M9.32	chicken (simile)	moving restlessly
A10.1	cat	overly critical ¹⁹⁰⁰
M10.1+M10.2 +M10.8	cat	false person / person unwilling to lend / strong person causing fear
M10.8	mouse	weak person
A1.12+A10.6+ M10.15+M10.18	dog	promiscuity, bad behaviour
M11.2	bird	human always busy
M11.6	raven (simile)	moving quickly
A13.5	grabbing a scorpion by the tail (simile)	difficulty, danger
A13.7+A13.8 +M13.23	crocodile	difficulties and dangers in life
A13.17	ant	small cause
M13.7+M13.8	scorpion	dangerous object / evil person

In conclusion, these lists make the conclusions drawn in section 5.1.3 more plausible.

¹⁹⁰⁰ TAHA 2011.

5.4. The Month of ‘tuuba’ and the Season of ‘tuubar’

ⲧⲜⲐⲖⲓ (‘toobi’) is one of the months in the Coptic calendar that has been pivotal to farming in the Nile Valley.¹⁹⁰¹ Already the fifth Ptolemaic month had been named ⲧⲜⲐⲖⲓ or ⲧⲜⲐⲖⲈ (Sahidic speech variety).¹⁹⁰² Among contemporary Nile Nubians there is a season with a similar name: *tuubar*, when the water of the river Nile receded and the river became shallow. Some of the fertile islands in the Dongola Reach could be reached on foot. The newly deposited Nile mud was used for agriculture. *tuubar* is the only season that occurs in Mattokki and Andaandi proverbs.

As since the mid-1960s the Aswan High Dam prevents the seasonal flooding of the river banks, the term *tuubar* has lost its significance for the Mattokki. Recently, with the opening of the Merowe High Dam the same has happened in the Dongola Reach. However, it survives in the lexeme *tuubar* ‘wading’, a noun derived from *tuub* ‘to wade’.

In the following I argue for an etymological relationship between ⲧⲜⲐⲖⲓ and *tuubar*. The wisdom surrounding Nubian proverbs dealing with *tuubar* is examined as it may be lost soon. The two Nile Nubian communities show some divergence when describing *tuubar*.

5.4.1. The Annual Cycle of the River Nile

Before the building of the Aswan and Merowe High Dams among Nubians and their riverain neighbours the year was divided into times of high water, receding water and low water, regulating the farm work, sowing when the ground was naturally manured and harvesting in time before the next flood. From ancient times the high-water mark was measured at the northern end of Nubia, Elephantine Island, determining the expected amount of harvest in Egypt and thereby the taxes farmers and peasants (Ar. *fellahīn*) had to pay to the state treasury.

¹⁹⁰¹ The names of Coptic months are based on BECKERATH 1980: 299. The current dates of the months are taken from www.scetis.com/kalender [last accessed on 22 September 2021].

¹⁹⁰² TILL 1966: 88 and OCHAŁA 2011: 229+240.

Through fertilizing the ground the Nile flood brought blessings. If it carried the right amount of water an abundant harvest could be expected. A low flood resulted in poverty and hunger; a high flood in destruction of farmland and villages.¹⁹⁰³ With the introduction of the counterpoised sweep for raising irrigation water and later the Nubian waterwheel agriculture could be extended outside the annual flood. Nevertheless, the water raised by the sweep and the waterwheel was minimal in comparison to the inundation of the river Nile.

So for the majority of the inhabitants of Nubia and Egypt a solar calendar based on the annual cycle of flood and low tide fitted their agricultural needs, also causing names of months (or seasons) to be similar. After the arrival of the Islamic armies in the 7th century and the introduction of the Islamic calendar based on lunar months, only the ruling elite of Egypt changed to it. Farmers along the river Nile continued using the Coptic solar calendar.

Depending on the location and the kind of calendar, dates differ. The flood moved from Dongola, reaching the borders of Egypt around 19 July, the beginning of the Ptolemaic New Year ¹⁹⁰⁴ then through Southern Egypt, reaching Cairo two weeks later.

A Dongolawi who observed the regular Nile flood when growing up wrote: “Mostly in June the river starts rising, its peak mostly end of August and September. By end of October”¹⁹⁰⁵ the waters were receding. The peak of the

¹⁹⁰³ AHMED S. AL-SHAHI (1972: 88) describes the flood of 1946 in Nuri in the Shaygiya area, upstream from Dongola “which destroyed most of the village and forced people to go and live on higher ground.” In the Dongola Reach inhabitants tell similar stories (without giving exact dates) and show the places they had to leave during a previous high flood.

¹⁹⁰⁴ I thank Claude Rilly (2012, p.c.) for solving some of the riddles regarding the different dates and calendars: “[T]he Ptolemaic calendar is just the ancestor of the Coptic calendar, not the same. During the Roman period in Egypt, it was matched with the Julian calendar. Our calendar is the Gregorian calendar, which had 10 days cancelled ... in 1538 and some tiny modifications added ... The lag between the Julian and Gregorian calendars is now 13 days.”

¹⁹⁰⁵ El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2012, p.c.

Nile flood is put “in the first month of the Coptic year, Tüt (September)” and for Lower Egypt “[a]round 19 October”.¹⁹⁰⁶

For a river-based agricultural society the first month after the Nile flood when the waters recede far enough for crops to be cultivated without irrigation is of immense importance. In the New Kingdom period during that time the “Swelling of the Barley”¹⁹⁰⁷ was celebrated. It dates from between 9 or 10 January to 7 February.¹⁹⁰⁸ While it is the coldest season of the year; according to a Coptic priest it is also “a month of blessings.”¹⁹⁰⁹

When asked for the season of *tuubar* Dongolawi with an above average interest in their language and culture place it in the month of December. That makes it earlier than the month of **ṬḠḠ** in the modern Coptic calendar which is explained by the earlier arrival of the flood in Nubia than in Egypt.

Nubians including the Fadijja¹⁹¹⁰ describe the season of *tuubar* as the prime time for agriculture, enabling cultivation (*teerar*) with little need for irrigation as the fields were covered earlier with the newly deposited moist Nile mud. Even from under the desert sand some remaining water could be brought up. The name is given the meaning “to ford in the cold”.¹⁹¹¹

Two Dongolawi add: In *tuubar* the water flows away slowly. Durra, hummus (Ar. *balīla*), beans, lupin and some kind of corn to feed animals like cows and donkeys are particularly cultivated. The farmer raises his clothing to wade (*tuub*) through the river instead of going by boat to the islands as in the other seasons. Clothing may easily become dirty.¹⁹¹² I myself remember crossing

¹⁹⁰⁶ COOPER 1976: 366+374, and HERZOG 1957a: 11. The first Ptolemaic month is named ‘Thot’. The Coptic New Year starts nearly two months later, on 11th September.

¹⁹⁰⁷ AZIZ SURYAL ATIYA 1991: 3. He derives *tobi* from *botti* ‘barley’.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Based on the Gregorian calendar. The first date (9 January) is taken from www.scetis.com/kalender [last accessed on 30 August 2023] and AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 32. – MEINARDUS 2006: 13 offers a Coptic liturgical outlook and sets the first date at 10 January.

¹⁹⁰⁹ DANIEL HABIB 2010.

¹⁹¹⁰ Maher Habbob 2012, p.c.

¹⁹¹¹ AHMED H. DAHAB 1995: 32.

¹⁹¹² Maḥmūd Sa’īd’s wife 2011, p.c.; El-Shafie El-Guzuuli 2012, p.c.

from the mainland to Magaasir Island (close to Dongola) on foot during *tuubar* in the early 2000s.

Three Mattokki men remember the season of *tuubar* before the *hijra*: Farmers needed about two weeks to prepare their agriculture for the season of *tuubar*. As the Mattokki region was hilly the flood water receded quickly. Damage to houses and agriculture required repair. The pits from which the waterwheels fetched the water had to be dug deeper. Pipes were installed to bring the water from the Nile to the pit. It was hard work. In order to encourage each other, one said to the other *tuuba bidaa* ‘(The month) Tuba is coming’. The lower water level during *tuubar* complicated navigation on the Nile, affecting trade with the Sudan. Both, air and water were cold. Those who endured the cold water were considered particularly strong.¹⁹¹³ The Mattokki have a saying: *tuuban essir bowwir aadem kogor tere*. ‘The human who swims in Tuba in the water is strong.’ In Andaandi: *tuuban essir adem bowwir kombon*.¹⁹¹⁴

tuuba occurs in Mattokki folktales. In a so-called ‘philosophical tale’ the wise third son says: “The richest is the [well] water of the month of *tooba*.” In another tale about hospitality it is narrated: “It was the month of *tooba*, and it was very cold.”¹⁹¹⁵ The story continues with the necessary preparations by the host to make the elderly guest feel comfortable.

Due to the narrow and hilly Nile Valley in Lower Nubia flood waters receded quickly, allowing less time for agriculture than in the Dongolawi Reach.

The contact with their northern riverain neighbours provided further Nile Nubian names for the months of the solar year. Not all of them are attested in Old Nubian. There are similar variations of dating as with **ṬOBI**:

The **third** Ptolemaic month ‘Athyr’, denoting mid-September to mid-October¹⁹¹⁶ becomes the Coptic month **ϩΑṬOΠ** (Old Nubian: **ḄOYṖ**) denoting

¹⁹¹³ ‘Umar Ḥasan 2011, p.c.; Thābit Zāki 2011, p.c.; Muḥammad Ṣubḥi 2023, p.c. As ‘Umar Ḥasan was born shortly after the *hijra* his information is based on oral sources.

¹⁹¹⁴ Muḥammad Ṣubḥi and Shawqi ‘Abd al-‘Azīz 2023, p.c.

¹⁹¹⁵ HASAN M. EL-SHAMY 1980: 79+131.

¹⁹¹⁶ Claude Rilly 2012, p.c.; also for the following Ptolemaic and Old Nubian months.

10 November to 9 December relating to *ádir* in Andaandi and *adîr* in Mattokki,¹⁹¹⁷ denoting the season of ‘winter’.

The **ninth** Ptolemaic month ‘Pakhons’ denoting mid-March to mid-April becomes the Coptic month **ΠΑΧΩΝ/ΠΑΦΩΝΣ** (Old Nubian: **ΠΑΧΩΝ**) denoting 9 May to 7 June (i.e. 6 months later than **ΖΑΘΩΡ**) relating to *bágoon* in Andaandi and *bógoon* in Mattokki,¹⁹¹⁸ both denoting the season of ‘summer’.

The **tenth** Ptolemaic month ‘Payni’, denoting mid-April to mid-May becomes the Coptic month **ΠΑΩΝΙ**¹⁹¹⁹ denoting 8 June to 7 July relating to *boôna/baôn* in Mattokki, not a season but a month: ‘June’.¹⁹²⁰ During that month boat travel to the south was very difficult due to strong southern winds (*nowwi/nawi*) replacing the usual northern and north-eastern winds.¹⁹²¹

One aspect of the lexeme *tuubar* until the construction of the Aswan and Merowe High Dams was that it denoted a season, not an exact date. In the same way, the names of the Coptic months **ΖΑΤΩΡ** and **ΠΑΧΩΝ** in Nubia mark the beginnings and also denote ‘winter’ and ‘summer’ respectively. That adds up to three seasons in Nile Nubia: low tide, winter, and summer.

Both Armbruster’s Andaandi and Massenbach’s Mattokki dictionary do not mention the lexeme *tuubar*. In Andaandi, the verb *tuub* is glossed as “sweep, brush”; in Mattokki *tuub* (variant *tub*) as “to wade” and “to cultivate the field”.¹⁹²² Massenbach’s example sentence is:

essin tuur tub toorossun

He waded into the inside of the water.

¹⁹¹⁷ BECKERATH 1980: 299; ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 5; MASSENBACH 1933: 142.

¹⁹¹⁸ ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 27; MASSENBACH 1933: 152; adds “die Zeit, wenn der Nil in Nubien voll ist” [trans.: the time when in Nubia the Nile is full]. The lexeme is not known among Mattokki living north of Shellal (Muḥammad Şubḥi 2022, p.c.).

¹⁹¹⁹ Not attested in Old Nubian.

¹⁹²⁰ SCHÄFER 1917: 90+92; MASSENBACH 1933: 152. There is no equivalent in ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]. I have not encountered the word myself.

¹⁹²¹ SCHÄFER 1917: 171; based on information from Samuel Ali Hissein.

¹⁹²² ARMBRUSTER 2010[1965]: 204; MASSENBACH 1933: 219; in the German original: “waten” and “das Feld bebauen”.

Andaandi and Mattokki explain the noun *tuubar* twofold: Besides deriving it from *tuub* ‘to wade’ plus the NR suffix *-ar*, some speakers understand *tuubar* as ‘the season after the flood’, when farmers can ‘wade’ through the water of the river Nile due to the low water level.

In conclusion, *tuubar* and *tuuba/ጥዕቤ* are nearly interchangeable as both terms denote a similar period of time.

About the *kharāj* (*xaraaj*), a land-tax from the Islamic period imposed on agricultural land and date palms, it was said: “[I]n Tūbah collection of the *kharāj* began.”¹⁹²³ Based on the bibliography consulted it cannot be concluded whether in Nubia due to the earlier Nile flood taxes were collected earlier than in Egypt.

5.4.2. Proverbs referring to ‘*tuubar*’

Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs describe Nubia without artificial dams that changed the flow of the river Nile so drastically. As that change happened much earlier among the Mattokki it has been more difficult to find Mattokki who remembered the time of the regular Nile flood. Unexpectedly, I have been told more Mattokki than Andaandi proverbs about *tuubar*. No other season besides *tuubar* is mentioned, not even the Nile flood. So it must have a special significance. What story do the proverbs tell us?

The following two Andaandi proverbs deal with the season of *tuubar*, one of them replacing *tuubar* by *essi shugurkin*:

A1.13 *essi shugurkin, kulu waandin.*

When the water descends [after the flood], the stone appears [becomes visible].

⇒ His weaknesses become all too easily visible.

A1.14 *kuukki tuubarro waandin.*

The men’s skin disease appears in the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season.

⇒ He behaves differently in public than in private.

Among the Mattokki the following five proverbs have been collected:

¹⁹²³ COOPER 1976: 367. For further information on the *kharāj* see semantic domain 7 ‘Agriculture: Date Palm’.

- M1.14 *tuubar en goon, tuubosru.*
 While it is the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season, you (PL) completely wade / wade indeed.
 ⇒ Seize the opportunity! // Don’t wait any longer!
- M1.15 *essin tuubar toon kiddark aa sarki.*
 From ‘wading’ in the [shallow] water he fears drowning.
 ⇒ He is overly cautious and risks nothing.
- M1.16 *faalagid tuubarro biinee.*
 The good appears in the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season.
 ⇒ A good friend turns up in a difficult situation.
- M1.17 *kurti tuubarro bi biinee.*
 The knee will appear in the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season.
 ⇒ Don’t judge something before you see it! // You are going where you should not go. // You are looking at something that you should not see.
- M1.18 *kuukki tuubarro aa biinee.*
 The men’s skin disease appears in the ‘wading’/*tuubar* season.
 ⇒ The secret will become obvious. // If you praise yourself, others will examine you. // In the end one will see if a promise was kept.

Although life as a farmer was tougher in Lower Nubia than in the Dongola Reach, Mattokki proverbs show a slightly more positive attitude toward the season of *tuubar*. It is related to an ‘opportunity’ (M1.14). Also, whereas for the Dongolawi in *tuubar* a ‘male disease’ (A1.14) appears, for Mattokki it is a ‘knee’ (M1.17) or even a ‘good thing/friend’ (M1.16).

What could be reasons for such a more positive attitude? Was the average Mattokki satisfied with less? Were proverbs a means of empowering or encouraging Mattokki in Lower Nubia to overcome their difficult environment? Or were the Mattokki proverbs uttered in a different context than the Andaandi ones?

One further aspect to consider: The season of *tuubar* serves as a metaphor for sexual matters. While “Nubians, and more specially their women, have the habit of discussing and talking about sexual matters without any shame in the presence of their children”,¹⁹²⁴ sexual matters are not part of Nubian proverbs collected by Hāmid Khabīr, or the two (female) Mattokki students. Only individual Nubians were prepared to share one such Andaandi (A1.14) and one such Mattokki (M1.18) proverb with the outsider, both about venereal male diseases. Thus far I have no explanation why especially the season of *tuubar* fits as a metaphor for sexual matters.

One Fadijja Nubian proverb that is similar to A1.14 and M1.18 is:¹⁹²⁵

tuubarra gilliitti bininna.

Upon crossing the waters, the penis / male sex organ appears.

⇒ Said about a situation that tests someone’s merits.

When taking off one’s clothes to cross a river or a canal, the penis (Mattokki *gilliid*) may become visible.

In conclusion, when examining the differences between Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs, it can be assumed that not only environmental issues, but a wide range of aspects needs to be considered.

5.5. Proverbs and Social Justice

Due to a tendency to “treat [oral knowledge] as secondary information compared to “‘real’ (colonial) knowledge”¹⁹²⁶ social justice between members of a dominating culture who emphasise written knowledge and members of non-dominant cultures who value wisdom handed down orally is hampered. In such cases racism could be counteracted and justice achieved by including proverbs, such an integral part of oral societies, in the curricula. Each section could become one lesson about living peacefully and in mutual respect.

¹⁹²⁴ FRÖHLICH 1921: 407.

¹⁹²⁵ MAHER HABBOB 2022, proverb 254.

¹⁹²⁶ NILES 2019: 3. He also provides lesson plans for teaching proverbs.

In the following I present how proverbs encourage and enable social justice, and a just way of using power.¹⁹²⁷ In subchapter 3.1 I wrote: “Even marginalized people when communicating their opinions, standing up for their principles, providing a rationale for defending their own points of view get a hearing through adapting creatively a proverb to a certain situation, deploying it and thereby rationalizing their conduct.” Proverbs provide such power even to the poor and oppressed. By contrast, in Western society one would need a lawyer to defend one’s opinion or doings, hard to afford for poor people.

How can social justice be achieved even for the poor and non-influential members of society? Semantic domain 23 ‘Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both’ has already addressed that topic. Here, I expand it based on proverbs from other semantic domains and group interactions.

5.5.1. Poverty

Nubian does not have a specific lexeme for a ‘poor’ person, or ‘poverty’, yet there were these people as the proverbs indicate. A euphemism was used to describe them: *Artin adem* ‘the human of God’.¹⁹²⁸

The term ‘poverty’ should not be restricted to economic factors only.¹⁹²⁹ Its meaning is wider. “Poverty is a social status. As such it is the invention of civilisation.”¹⁹³⁰ One needs to distinguish between the meaning of ‘poor’ in a society geared toward economic success and a society based on honour and

¹⁹²⁷ Some positive sides of power are presented by the Korean-American HONG (2012: 5) who compares individualistic and collectivistic cultures: “... in a collectivistic culture, having the proper hierarchical relationship creates a safe and rich mentoring environment.”

¹⁹²⁸ Kamal Hussein 2022, p.c.

¹⁹²⁹ As in the definition by the Nigerian TITILAYO (2015: 153): “Poverty is defined as a lack of minimum food and shelter necessary for maintaining life. More specifically, absolute/extreme poverty is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.” – Cf. United Nations Human Development Index. It also widens the basic understanding of economic poverty: hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI [last accessed on 16 August 2022]

¹⁹³⁰ ENGELKE 2018: 6; based on Marshall Sahlins 1972.

shame. In pre-*hijra* Nubia women are said to have differed less in economic ownership than in the number of their children.¹⁹³¹ Therefore, I recognise two aspects of poverty, socio-economic poverty and poverty relating to ‘loss of status’. I ask: Did historic Nubian society show such a high degree of social justice and support by one’s kinship group that poverty was less felt or even partly eliminated?

I begin with six Andaandi and one Mattokki proverb that speak literally about being poor or poverty:

A2.6 *fogirn tii komeged shugurin.*

The cow of the poor falls at the [waterwheel] beam.

A14.9 *toonin kaar fogir ishkartin.*

In a house with [many] children poverty is a guest.

A23.7 *fogir irjeen basilu.*

The poor is the food of the rich.

A23.8 *fogir irjeen anmun.*

The poor does not become rich.

A23.9 *eron gasuweerki dolkin, tokkon fogir irjeen anelnar juumen,
irjeen ekolnar juu!*

If you need something, just do not go to one who was poor and became rich, go to the one who has always been rich!

A23.10 *fogirkonon asikkiidir daa buuran dogoor, irjeengonon ragabar
daa buuran genun.*

It is better that the rich are present in the killing than the poor present in the borrowing.

M23.6 *agos weer amaajee buul weer digirsu.*

The poor one binds [asks] the one girthed [with a belt only].

In the first proverb the poor person is at least well off enough to own a cow. Only if the cow falls down and cannot continue drawing the waterwheel does survival become a challenge. The third proverb describes a person who has

¹⁹³¹ A. Goo-Grauer 2017, p.c.

lost his independence. The wealthy person can do with him whatever he wants. Among the Dongolawi there have been such wealthy traders and businessmen, the *jallāba*.

By contrast, the social standing of the average Mattokki within national society has been lower. Economically before the *hijra* their agricultural land produced less yield. Yet surprisingly, only one Mattokki proverb (M23.6) talks literally about poverty.

The Mattokki I discussed the proverbs with were more ready than Andaandi to interpret some of those proverbs as relating to economic suffering. The next proverb is similar in Andaandi and Mattokki yet interpreted differently:

Andaandi proverb

Mattokki proverb

A1.12 *essi kutti ankin,
welli tuubiran.*

If the water [river]
becomes shallow,
the dogs wade [in it].

M1.13 *essi shugurki,
weli tedder aa tuubira.*

If the water [river]
descends,
the dogs wade on/in it.

- elicited Andaandi meanings:

⇒ A family that lacks integrity gives other people, especially malicious people, the opportunity to intervene in the family's affairs and further aggravate the situation. // She is an immoral woman with a bad reputation who will end up promiscuous.

- elicited Mattokki meanings:

⇒ When a wealthy person becomes poor, even someone of low status can hurt him. // Something has become easy. // When there is no danger everyone can make himself a hero.

Note, that the shameful meanings which the research participants related to A1.12 were not mentioned when discussing M1.13.

Further Andaandi proverbs that are interpreted as speaking about being poor or poverty are: A2.3 A10.6 A13.7 A19.40 A19.41 A23.4 A24.9 A30.1.

One of these Andaandi proverbs is of special significance:

A24.9 *ademion jamme kalkiran, er oygi ojos dummaregi kalin.*

If the people eat together, you deliver the okra [to those celebrating, and then] eat the chicken [yourself].

⇒ Eat together and share equally so that the poor do not feel their poverty.

The proverb literally describes an example of unacceptable behaviour during a celebration or a shared *karaama* meal. Instead, the poor are to be treated like the rich, and the poor may even eat so much that the next meal of the day can be missed.

Further Mattokki proverbs that are interpreted as speaking about being poor or poverty are: M1.13 M1.20 M4.7 M8.1 M9.34 M10.20 M19.27 M21.13 M24.6 M24.11 M28.15 M30.6.

Their number (12) is higher than that of the Andaandi proverbs (8).

These observations may lead to two propositions, at this stage unproved, regarding socio-economic and status differences:

- In pre-*hijra* Nubia economic and status differences within the Mattokki community were not as visible as among the Dongolawi. The Mattokki community felt any economic want ('poverty') or loss of status less and therefore expressed it less literally.
- These days, the economic and status differences between an average Mattokki and a rich Egyptian are greater than between an average Andaandi and a rich Sudanese. As a result, the Mattokki community may be readier to apply a proverb to a situation of economic want.

When discussing further areas of social justice I will keep these propositions in mind.

Generosity and hospitality are considered as ethical practices for overcoming poverty:

We are convinced that ethics have a more profound effect on the behaviour of Nubians than immediate economic gains.¹⁹³²

¹⁹³² KRONENBERG 1987: 394.

That requires interest in one's fellow villagers. One Andaandi proverb speaks literally about it:

A24.6 *karamgi kool gaari uus gojar dogoor genun.*

Porridge [from boiled grains] with generous people is better than slaughtered [meat] with bad [greedy people].

A further proverb about generosity occurs in Andaandi and Mattokki:

A25.3 *kasirki kaased daal, malle ogijmun.*

He who has wrapped the turban around, not everybody is a man.

M25.2 *kasirked degil, malle ogijminu.*

He who covers [himself] with the turban, not everybody is a man.

- elicited Andaandi and Mattokki meanings:

⇒ Not every man is brave, generous and has confidence.

As Nubian men like to wear a turban, they also want to be considered generous. The proverb provides a positive incentive, thereby encouraging one to overcome poverty by showing real generosity.

5.5.2. Leadership and Government

After the demise of the medieval Nubian kingdoms kings (*or*) continued to reside in Argo, alas only ruling on a regional level and having much less influence. Under the British native administration the Zibeir family in Imaani claimed the kingship over all of the Dongola Reach until its last king died in 1971. In the Dongola Reach a couple of villages were ruled by a district magistrate (Ar. *'umda*). In the northern Dongola Reach *'umdas* resided in Aartigaasha Island, Dibela, and Daar al-Awwada.¹⁹³³ The Sudanese president Ja'afar Nimeiri (1969-1985) dissolved the system of native administration.

The deputy headman (*samil*) of each village or about two or three hamlets (*neja*) was also a tax collector.¹⁹³⁴ Each waterwheel had its *samed*, the head of the farmers and overseer of the irrigable land watered by that waterwheel.

¹⁹³³ 'Abd al-'Athīm 'Abd al-Hamīd 2018, p.c.; Ordesse Ḥamed 2022, p.c.

¹⁹³⁴ Aḥmad Hamza 2017, p.c.; 'Abd al-Jalīl Bashīr 2020, p.c.

Each one of them may have been tempted to abuse their power and punish people unjustly.

In Lower Nubia a similar kind of native administration was introduced by the British colonial government but without a king. The *'umda* ruled a couple of hamlets that formed a village.

While for a subordinate it is difficult to criticise a superior, in different African languages proverbs enable a more straight forward verbal communication toward a ruler.¹⁹³⁵ A few Nubian proverbs deal similarly with a government. A negligent government worker occurs in A22.21; the difficulty of the ruler's work is described in A26.5 and A26.6. Other proverbs encourage leadership, teach its necessity and advice how to practise it:

<p>A9.36 <i>gur tenn nishshigi</i> <i>maamun.</i> The bull is unable [not to carry] its horn. ⇒ Everyone [including a ruler] can endure his responsibilities.</p>	<p>M13.18 <i>elum daameeki, kaaree</i> <i>ekki bi kali.</i> When there is no croco- dile, the fish will eat you. ⇒ A government needs to be strong to protect its citizens. Without it other people will kill you.</p>
<p>A12.3 <i>kuur belkin, dabis or</i> <i>anin.</i> If the sheatfish leaves, the mullet becomes the king. ⇒ The power belongs to the one who is strongest. // The power of the powerful and the weak- ness of the weak are limited in time.</p>	<p>M13.21 <i>essir elum daameninga,</i> <i>kuuri yaa bowwira.</i> In the water where there is no crocodile, the sheatfish swim. ⇒ Without a strong leader (/parents) everyone (/children) behaves like they want.</p>

¹⁹³⁵ GOLKA 1994 lists example proverbs from various African languages.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A18.1 <i>erwiis owwi kubki kiddigirin.</i>
Two captains cause the boat to sink.
⇒ Many leaders create a problem. // Give responsibility to only one person to avoid conflict and disaster.</p> | <p>M18.1 <i>kub rayis owwikool, aa kiddosi.</i>
The boat having two captains, it has sunk.
⇒ Many leaders create a problem.</p> |
| <p>A18.2 <i>kub erwiiski koomenil kiddin.</i>
The boat without a captain drowns.
⇒ The situation requires leadership and experience.</p> | <p>M13.25 <i>jelegkon darbadigi wayena?</i>
And does the jackal care for the chicken?
⇒ He is not trustworthy and should not be put into a leadership position.</p> |
| <p>A26.5 <i>haakim an teebil, tenn kaar naddigi niin.</i>
Becoming the ruler, he drinks bitterness in his house [his area of rule].
⇒ A governor should take care of everything. Everywhere, ..., he encounters great difficulties.</p> | <p>M13.30 <i>eddi eged wittig aa kalmunu.</i>
The hyena does not eat the crazy sheep.
⇒ The government employs the clever one.</p> |
| <p>A26.6 <i>haakum an teebil deewnaar arned anin.</i>
He who is nominated as ruler, he becomes the centre pillar in the kitchen.
⇒ The one who governs is responsible for all tasks.</p> | |

It is striking how Mattokki, unlike Andaandi, again prefers metaphors from semantic domain 13 ‘Animals Regarded as Dangerous’. The government is definitely viewed critically. Or is it a warning against the abuse of power in a high position? Or does it imply a certain fear of leadership and government?

One pair of proverbs speaks more openly about this topic, with Andaandi being more straight forward:

<p>A7.1 <i>bentigon, beriged buun goon, tenn xaraajki kobin.</i> Even the date palm, although resting on its side, pays its taxes.</p> <p>⇒ Complaint about a government whose taxes are too high.</p>	<p>⇒</p>	<p>M7.3 <i>ambu sowwidir gambug aa undurra.</i> They hammer the axe in the completely dry doum palm.</p> <p>⇒ The government hits the one who does not want to listen.</p>
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When a powerful person is dethroned someone else will take over that role, but may abuse power in a similar way:

... the oppressed must not in seeking to regain their humanity become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.¹⁹³⁶

In Andaandi this idea is expressed as:

<p>A9.39 <i>saab an tooregi, te gur ankon?</i> He became a cat in order to enter, [and when] did he become a bull?</p> <p>⇒ He changes his behaviour, first he pretends to be nice, later when he comes to power he behaves badly.</p>
--

So, an uprising is not the answer. Not only the government, but also citizens may abuse their position and power. So far, I have heard only one Andaandi proverb that expresses it:

<p>A22.42 <i>gambu shigillo tookin, erkon aadweerki mer!</i> When the axe enters the forest, you cut a handle!</p> <p>⇒ Citizens take from a government whatever they want.</p>

Government officials may be of no use and hinder social justice, as expressed only in Andaandi:

¹⁹³⁶ FREIRE 1970: 1.

A22.21 *hukuumagi ashman iriged kallin goon aagin.*

Although he pushes away the government with a rope of bast, he stays.

⇒ His actions have no effect. // He is a civil servant who does not do his job. Neither the government nor the civilians have any benefit from him.

Such proverbs may be absent among the Mattokki, as pre-*hijra* Mattokki had less contact with government officials, and so talk less about them. However, there was an awareness about people that were stronger and abused power:

M11.7 *koog attaki, shibillegon aa kabki.*

When the raven brings [something], the kite catches [it].

⇒ The stronger one takes away from the weaker one.

Both Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs talk about people that were strong enough to defend themselves, maybe even against the government:

A19.37 *jerki kool,*
tuur jomkattimun.
The one who has a back
is not hit in the
stomach.

M19.29 *jerki kool, tuun dogoor*
aa jomtakkimnu.
The one who has a back is
not punched above the
stomach.

⇒ He has influence and the ability to mediate.

Both proverbs can be applied to the Arab concept of *was̄ta*, already discussed in semantic domain 19 ‘Body Parts’.

Subchapter 2.5 presented an oral history that claimed Mattokki to origin from the East or the Arabian Peninsula. Based on the interpretation of the proverbs in this section that seems unlikely. Even while being very careful in deducing history from proverbs, there does not seem to be any hint that Mattokki proverbs reflect the environment of a former ruling elite.

5.5.3. Non-dominant People and their Influence

In Andaandi proverbs the role of the marginalized and non-dominant person in terms of social status and power is more discussed than in Mattokki proverbs. The following three Andaandi proverbs are performed when the

elderly give advice to someone who tries to take an influential person to court and sue him. The first proverb occurs also in Arabic, for the second and the third an Arabic counterpart is unknown. Also, their grammatical structure is more complex; the second one contains a conditional clause, and the third one a question:

A9.1 *wel uukkin, kam nogin.*

The dog barks, the camel walks.

A11.3 *fooja wiigkin, jowwi boormun.*

If the sparrow chirps, the acacia does not disintegrate.

A28.15 *turug jebello toon mingi sokken?*

What does the wind raise from the hill?

⇒ (all three) A weak person does not have any effect on a powerful person.

Here, the non-dominant person has no influence. Another Andaandi proverb speaks about a marginalized person causing some negative effect on a more prestigious person:

A11.7 *siriyan iigir simbil kudden.*

In the slave's fire [even] the Egyptian plover bird gets burnt.

⇒ One gets hurt by the mistakes of the lowliest. // A problem caused by the least in society affects everyone.

Alternatively, the consequence may be positive:

A13.17 *goorkon, ter accin, agarki oddikirin.*

Even the ant, it bites, it causes pain at that place.

⇒ Small causes can have a big impact (positive and negative). // Even a small child, considered weak by some, is able to do something useful.

A22.40 *intille ekkon minelle? aygon andir gambu eri.*

A needle – what are you? While I am – [like] an axe in my things.

⇒ Warning not to despise seemingly insignificant people. They can achieve something that others cannot.

When it comes to a court case the dealings of a marginalized person are scrutinised more carefully than those of a more prestigious person:

A19.40 *jagadn ossigi korkottir tigran.*

They trace the leg of the weak [people even] in the clay.

⇒ He treats rich people differently from poor people.

Altogether, the weak, poor and marginalized (symbolised by a dog, a sparrow, and the wind) cannot change their situation. There seems to be little hope for such Dongolawi based on customary wisdom. Instead, a person of high status may by his own actions weaken his position:

A9.2 *kamduul kamtood ankon.*

The old camel became a boy [young] camel.

⇒ He was an influential person, did something bad and his influence waned.

The one Mattokki proverb that falls into this category sets a different tone:¹⁹³⁷

M9.4 *goor goolin, agarro kam aa digir.*

The ant digs, the camel falls into the place [hole].

⇒ Don't despise someone of low status! He can influence someone of high status.

It gives a Mattokki of low status a more positive outlook regarding his ability and opportunity to initiate change. This may be explained by pre-*hijra* Mattokki Nubians not knowing a king or sovereign. So a person of low status got influence more easily. Quite a few Mattokki confirm such an interpretation, pointing to their participation in the January 25 revolution in 2011.

However, not every Mattokki agrees. One Mattokki in 2006 reckoned that Mattokki had mainly stayed in the service sector since they had moved to the cities about 100 years ago. He argued that Mattokki achieve little, including in the area of scholarly research, 'as they are lacking a strong heart.' However, nowadays more and more Mattokki are moving to positions outside the service sector. I will return to the topic of fear in section 5.5.5.

¹⁹³⁷ Nobiin only knows a proverb with a similar meaning talking about will and persistence: "dripping water can break stones". (Abdel Halim Sabbar 2011, p.c.)

The difficulty of overcoming the barrier between a person of high status and one of low status is explained in the next proverb that I heard in Andaandi and Mattokki:

<p>A3.8 <i>essi aalir belmun.</i> The water does not come out at the high [place]. ⇒ The lowly one cannot speak with a high one.</p>	<p>M3.5 <i>essi aaligi maarosilgi,</i> <i>waatigi bi juusu.</i> The water that was not able [to go] the high [way], it went the low. ⇒ The weak one cannot hit the strong one.</p>
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This kind of thinking was confirmed during a visit to a Dongolawi bus worker in Khartoum. The women present explained that in the Sudan it is impossible for a rich man to become a poor man's friend and vice versa. It is one of the privileges of an outsider that he may more easily overstep such boundaries.

One place where Nubians may overcome such boundaries is hospitality. It is recommended to share a meal with the poor, as expressed in A24.9 that has also been mentioned earlier in section 5.5.1 'Poverty'.

5.5.4. Opportunism

As a result, the weak and marginalized person is coerced to comply with the desires of the powerful, in proverb A19.30 symbolised by a strong hand, showing the weak person's servility. This proverb is said to originate from Arabic. For the following proverb A6.3 an Arabic counterpart is unknown:

<p>A19.30 <i>ii er iski iwismeningi,</i> <i>doog!</i> Kiss the hand you are not able to twist! ⇒ As a weak person you should not fight a strong man. It will not be in your favour.</p>	<p>M13.3 <i>ayya shegir toon belki,</i> <i>ayya tenna kadeegi yaa</i> <i>luffee.</i> When the snake comes out from the hole, the snake throws her garment away. ⇒ He conforms to / masters the situation.</p>
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- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>A6.3 <i>turug teebinn agarked
silli!</i>
Winnow at the place
where the wind is!</p> <p>⇒ Instead of disagreeing,
you should adapt to the
community's opinion.</p> | <p>M13.10 <i>icciin dullogi yaa
joomunu.</i>
The scorpion does not hit
the strong [quiet] one.</p> <p>⇒ He is afraid of somebody
who is stronger. // He
knows how to cover
himself.</p> |
|---|--|

All proverbs support (in Andaandi) or explain (in Mattokki) opportunism leading to treating an influential person differently and better than a person of low status. Andaandi proverbs additionally describe the resulting hypocrisy:

- A1.14 *kuukki tuubarro waandin.*
The men's skin disease appears in the 'wading'/*tuubar* season.
- ⇒ He behaves differently in public than in private.
- A4.1 *siltin togoon essi.*
Water under the chaff.
- ⇒ He does not show his true personality. He is different inside than outside.
- A19.20 *nel koccir aroon.*
The tooth is white on the top.
- ⇒ While he is saying one thing, he is thinking the opposite inside.
- However both, opportunism and hypocrisy, are to be overcome:

- A10.9 *nonga kabasir darrel.*
[He is like] The chameleon that climbed up to the *kabas*.

All that differs from the advice given in A24.9, frequently cited before:

- A24.9 *ademion jamme kalkiran, er oygi ojos dummaregi kalin.*
If the people eat together, you deliver the okra [to those celebrating, and then] eat the chicken [yourself].
- ⇒ Eat together and share equally so that the poor do not feel their poverty.

Surprisingly, Mattokki proverbs and Mattokki explaining them sideline marginalisation and opportunism. Are Mattokki too afraid to talk about it? That is why in the next section I will look at proverbs expressing fear.

5.5.5. Fear

As for the subject of fear, Mattokki proverbs are in the majority:

<p>A1.2 <i>urur toon bel taakon.</i> He came out of the river. ⇒ The stranger causes fear.</p>	<p>M1.15 <i>essin tuubar toon kiddark aa sarki.</i> From ‘wading’ in the [shallow] water he fears drowning. ⇒ He is overly cautious and risks nothing.</p>
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M1.22 *hanjelokeeg aa saarkili, bowwigi kuurkoomnu.*
 They who fear the clay, they do not learn to swim.
 ⇒ Take a small risk and overcome your fear!

M7.6 *ergon kinisser toon sarkiked, bettig aa kalmunu.*
 As you fear [to be hurt] by the thorn,
 you do not eat the date.
 ⇒ Never be afraid of any difficulty!

<p>A13.1 <i>kaag accisin, tirti irigi nalkin, wariji.</i> If he whom the snake bit, sees a rope, he jumps each time. ⇒ After an accident even something minor which reminds one of the accident is feared.</p>	<p>M13.1 <i>ayya accisin, irrina guta aa sarki.</i> [As] a snake had bitten him, he fears a piece of rope.</p>
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M13.22 *sittaagki elumweer essi duulg aa sarkikoo?*
 When did a crocodile ever fear the river?
 ⇒ I am not afraid.

Mattokki proverbs mention ‘fear’ explicitly while Andaandi proverbs only speak indirectly about ‘fear’. That agrees with an opinion by the Fadijja author Haggag Hassan Oddoul that Egyptian Nubians face an identity crisis

resulting in greater fear than Sudanese Nubians. In the past they were members of a kingdom, nowadays other Egyptians consider them as a ‘tribe’. In Andaandi proverbs fear is related to magic and cursing. The village of Kodi is a place where magicians allegedly still live, another one is Nawwa near Old Dongola. They are supposed to be able to make tables fly, as witnessed by one Dongolawi. He was invited to study magic but refused as his grandmother told him not to. Magic is considered to have negative results:

A1.16 *essigi meerkirin.*

He causes water to freeze.

⇒ He can do the impossible. // He uses magic.

A25.4 *surreel kusin, juudel tancen.*

The one who ties [the garment], opens [it]; the one who stirs, tastes.

⇒ If you do something bad to someone else, the victim or their children will get back at you or your children. // Anyone who uses magic against others must bear the consequences.

Only if magic is performed by a Sufi mystic (Ar. *fegir*) may it be regarded more positively. However, it is claimed that some Muslim sheikhs specialise in cursing first and then lifting the curse for the sole purpose of gaining money.

Among the Mattokki stealing was assumed to be possible through sorcery. In the past, some inhabitants of West Sehel (Mattokki) and Ibriim (Fadijja) were able to write letters on certain objects, thereby making them invisible so that they could be taken away unnoticed as booty.¹⁹³⁸ Here, the magical status ascribed to literacy is noteworthy.

All these incidents show that fear, sometimes enforced by magic, is created to keep people in submission and disable social justice.

¹⁹³⁸ Mattokki man from West Sehel 2014, p.c.

5.5.6. Improving Low Status

How can fear and low status be overcome? A proverb from Sierra Leone that recommends “It is better to be loved than feared.”¹⁹³⁹ cannot be found either in Andaandi or in Mattokki. Also, when talking about people with low status improving it, Andaandi proverbs expect no good results:

A1.9 *urugi nalmenel, merer kiddin.*

The one who did not see the river drowns in the sea.

⇒ He first lived as a pauper, then suddenly became wealthy and now does not know what to do with his wealth.

A2.3 *hawwaad argadegi kaaysindo, arab deenaabki gonysindo.*

At the time the fisherman forged the cogwheel, at the time the Arab built the lounge.

⇒ Everything is getting upside down. The rich are getting poor and the poor are getting rich.

A10.8 *argon bi adem andu, welligon argi bi uukkiran.*

We will become a [rich, important] human, and the dogs will bark at us.

⇒ Currently we are not important, Insha’Allah that will change and all people will notice us. // He has gained riches and does not greet the people anymore.

A16.1 *haaja timbeski koomunu.*

The thing [money] does not have a brother.

⇒ He has suddenly become rich and forgets his relatives and former friends who are in need.

A23.9 *eron gasuweerki dolkin, tokkon fogir irjeen anelnar juumen, irjeen ekolnar juu!*

If you need something, just do not go to one who was poor and became rich, go to the one who has always been rich!

¹⁹³⁹ proverbicals.com/sierra-leonean-proverbs [last accessed on 6 September 2022]

⇒ A formerly poor person never forgets that once he was poor. He is afraid to become poor again and therefore does not share.

Only one Mattokki proverb describes a low person improving his status. It occurs within a setting of disorder and the outcome is not disclosed, however, it can be concluded that no positive result is expected:

M28.3 *dunya fagan dagash, abulhiseen raakib alfaras.*

The world is mixed up, a fox is riding on the horse.

⇒ The lowly one has become an important person.

Slaves, discussed in more detail in semantic domain 23, occur in Andaandi proverbs (A9.4, A11.7, A13.6, A23.6) and in Mattokki proverbs, alas less frequently (M23.8, M23.9). While they may improve their status (as in proverb A9.4) that does not seem to bring them any good.

One wonders why neither in Andaandi nor in Mattokki increasing one's status is depicted more positively. Is it for the reason that gaining power leads to abusing power as already discussed at the end of section 5.5.2, or is opposition by non-dominant people discouraged, or is life less complicated when everything remains stable?

5.5.7. Hard work

Any community can only survive if there are enough members working hard and honestly. Therefore, proverbs encourage positive work ethics, as in other parts of the world:

... building a healthy moral society by making use of the truly ethical principles enshrined and fostered by proverbs addressing the issues of integrity, honesty and transparency will contribute greatly to the economic growth of nations.¹⁹⁴⁰

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1758), one of the founding fathers of the United States of America realised the importance of solid work ethics and wrote a famous essay on "The Way to Wealth" including over 100 proverbs. That is why it might be worth trying to employ proverb workshops to combat poverty.

¹⁹⁴⁰ MFONYAM 2014:14.

The Dongolawi and the Mattokki proverbs reflect the Nubians' attitude toward work ethics. Hard work is part of their identity. However, proverbs probably differ from actual behaviour, as otherwise such proverbial encouragement would not be necessary. Indeed, some Nubians observe Sudanese who are responsible for the decline in their own country moving to the West and scold them for living there on social welfare. That is compared to the Arabian Peninsula where each Nubian has his work.

The challenges of agricultural work are more pronounced by inhabitants of the Dongola Reach, maybe as Egyptian Lower Nubia offered less irrigated land and Mattokki farmers began moving to the cities at an earlier stage in history:

A2.4 *Islamgi tolled daan.*

He continually draws the yoke.

A5.5 *turbal kubn aargon tabintuurkon menillo neewemun.*

The farmer does not rest except at the moorings and in the smithy.

Still, in spite of the harsh living conditions a Nubian should not complain about his work:

A9.36 *gur tenn nishshigi maamun.*

The bull is unable [not to carry] its horn.

⇒ Everybody can endure his responsibilities.

One's work needs to be well prepared and started early enough:

A3.3 *malti dolin, baa niimun.*

The channel wants
[water, otherwise] the
plot does not drink.

M3.4 *essi baaro aa jomna, teron jabir tallemeekin?*

Does the water reach the
plot, if it does not go through
a channel [first]?

⇒ Without preparation and efforts no results are achieved. //
Everything has its order.

M19.40 *ganynyir kinnar geew aa shugurmunu.*

In the small razor the blood does not get off.

⇒ A little effort is not enough to achieve the goal. // Work hard!
 Andaandi proverbs put the emphasis on team work. It is ensured that within a team everybody's role, especially the role of the leader, is clear and one should not meddle in someone else's work:

A19.27 *ii weer olli jommun.*

One hand does not clap.

A26.3 *dullogi jammegan, shooro anin.*

If they [carry] the heavy [thing] together, it becomes light.

A18.1 *erwiis owwi kubki kiddigirin.*

Two captains cause the boat to sink.

A13.5 *irin jelligi aawiran, icciingi eewir aarrankiriin.*

They are doing the work of [other] people, it is similar to grabbing the scorpion by the tail.

Proverb A13.5 shows some similarity to proverb M5.2 that emphasises that one's work cannot be left to others:

M5.2 *tenn arid menillu zool tubroog aa jomna?*

Does a person [farmer] hack [with] the hoe except his own soil?

M19.20 *enn ii meenil enna jerk aa koodmunu!*

Except with your [own] hand do not scratch your back!

In the end everyone is responsible for his own work:

A25.4 *surreel kusin, juudel tancen.*

The one who ties [the garment], opens [it]; the one who stirs, tastes.

M19.21 *enn ii ikke aawsu.*

Your hand made so.

A27.9 *kulu dullogi sokkel, tenn urked sokken.*

The one who [picks up and] carries a heavy stone carries it with his head.

M21.3 *ter, koolan digril, aa onymunu.*

The one who falls down by his own fault does not cry.

The work needs to be done whole-heartedly:

<p>A29.1 <i>baantir tool, urki</i> <i>tagirmun.</i> She who enters in the dance, she does not cover the head.</p>	<p>M1.14 <i>tuubar en goon, tuubosru.</i> While it is the ‘wading’/tuubar season, you (PL) wade indeed.</p>
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Among the Mattokki it is added that work needs to be done systematically:

M19.36 *ossigi injin agarro, uskur talle.*
 Raise the foot at the place [you are], put [it forward] and walk!

Among the Dongolawi it is added to mend a weak spot first:

A22.15 *iri jagadn keello merin.*
 The rope breaks at the weakest place.

Laziness, the opposite of good work ethics, harms not only the individual, but society:

A6.7 *er gussar mashegi gaarkomun.*
 You did not mill the [amount of a] small plate in the grain
 store.

A19.23 *gumurkool*
 [He is] Having a neck.

A22.24 *gaalon attir buun goon, essin eerked diin.*
 Although you are near the [water] jar, you died from thirst.

5.5.8. Conclusion

When being poor or feeling unjustly dealt with there is one hope left for a Nubian. The time of the powerful is limited as there will be a day of judgement when God will treat everyone equally:

A12.3 *kuur belkin, dabis or anin.*

If the sheatfish leaves, the mullet becomes the king.

⇒ The power of the powerful and the weakness of the weak are
 limited in time.

A23.4 *nishshi kinynyi nishshigi koolnar aarin nahaarki.*

One without horn takes along one with horn on the day.

⇒ On the day of judgement, everyone ... will be treated equally and receive justice against arbitrariness.

I got a glimpse of that hope while waiting at the ferry crossing between Dongola town and Seleem after *'id al-Aḏḏha (kore duul)* in 2006. A posh car with a well-dressed passenger and his chauffeur needed two slots and therefore didn't fit on the ferry where only one slot was left. The wealthy man demanded that one of the other cars left the ferry. So a soldier tried to get another car to move back on to the waiting ramp. But the driver of the other car maintained his dignity and refused to give in. Finally, the wealthy man returned to the queue, and another, smaller car took the vacant space. The pedestrians on the ferry were extremely pleased as the wealthy man had lacked modesty.

One of the above propositions about the Mattokki is strengthened by examining specific areas of social justice and power: Based on the proverbs collected so far, prior to the *hijra* economic and status differences within Mattokki society were not made as obvious as among the Dongolawi. Mattokki society seems to have felt economic want ('poverty') or loss of status less and therefore expressed it less literally.

And finally: Including proverbs from Nubia and other non-dominant groups in the national school curricula could boost self-confidence without the need to identify as former or future Arabs, and increase the respect of the Arab majority for other ethnicities. They would experience more social justice on a national level and participate more easily in the national economy, improving the country's performance on an international level.¹⁹⁴¹

5.6. Negative Behaviour

The Nubian concept of *sutera* that covers negative behaviour was introduced in subchapter 2.1 'Research Environment'. Despite *sutera*, I have heard of

¹⁹⁴¹ The Canadian government successfully follows this route: www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/blogue-blog/multilinguisme-multilingualism-eng [last accessed on 30 September 2022]

incidents that shed a less positive light on life in Nubia and various Nubians. One of the first incidents concerns the General Nubian Club in Cairo where in 2002/2003 funds were allegedly embezzled.

Nubian proverbs that talk about refraining from bad behaviour are one way to discover negative conduct. I begin by discussing effects of malicious talking, especially telling lies, then bad behaviour against one's own family, and finally other general vices, such as greed and pride.

5.6.1. Talking and Lying

The opposite of *wanasa* is expressed as *weer weegonon millinci*: 'They together are bad.' meaning 'They do not talk together.'¹⁹⁴² Conversations among average Nubians may differ from Arab ones, as related by a non-Nubian Egyptian woman: If one asks a non-Nubian Egyptian: "What have you been doing?" then "I'm fine" or "Nothing much" is sufficient, but a Nubian expects a definite list of things one has done. When the question is, "Where have you been?" or "Why haven't we seen you for a while?" a non-Nubian Egyptian may confine himself to, "I was busy". A Nubian wants to know more.

Still, one needs to be careful when talking. One can talk too much, too loud, or at the wrong moment:

- A10.1 *saab iccigi duure maakin, naddin, en.*
 If the cat fails to reach the milk, it says: "It is sour."
 ⇒ He likes criticising others.
- A19.17 *tokkon enn nedti undurmen!*
 Just do not insert your tongue!
 ⇒ Don't interfere by talking!
- A20.1 *banynyiidon dungiged ekin, kitterar nobren.*
 If talking is [like] silver, silence is [like] gold.
 ⇒ Your silence is better than your talking.

¹⁹⁴² Kamal Hussein 2023, p.c.

A20.6 *wicciirn iir dabin, banynyiidn iir dabmunu.*

The mark of the stick disappears, the mark of talking does not disappear.

⇒ Don't curse or talk maliciously! It has negative consequences.

A22.22 *shibir ulugki koon.*

The [large] basket has an ear.

⇒ His speech should take place in private but he can be heard by others.

For Mattokki, fewer proverbs fall into this category:

M22.20 (compare A20.6)

tottiged jillesi.

I remembered with the 'totti'-sound.

⇒ You said something bad that I did not want to hear.

The worst kind of conversation is a lie, as expressed in a song by the Mattokki singer Şidqi Aḥmad:

ebeden mursig aa baynmini, walla mursig aa weelg aa birigmini.

I never say a lie and I do not like him who says a lie.

Nubians consider themselves to be honest and are proud of it: "Honesty is very highly prized and frequently mentioned, as is the associated virtue of dependability."¹⁹⁴³ An elderly Mattokki man and former mayor told me about his inner conflict when he was asked to lie on behalf of the government. He wondered how God could hear prayers, when one had previously lied.¹⁹⁴⁴

Therefore, proverbs about lying offer a means to prevent it, but also show that it was present in Nubia:

¹⁹⁴³ FERNEA and FERNEA 1991: 169. According to FERNEA and GERSTER 1973: 39 "a Nubian is not unlike a description of a proper nineteenth-century Puritan English gentleman."

¹⁹⁴⁴ Here and in the following I do not state the names of some research participants, as their critical contributions could be misinterpreted.

Andaandi proverb

A9.13 *mursin kaj boodoskin,
aleen kaj duurmun.*
If the horse of lies runs,
the horse of truth cannot
reach [it].
⇒ Lies move faster than the
truth.

A22.19 *mursin iri urtina.*
The rope of the lie is
short.
⇒ One cannot keep up a lie
for long. Eventually the
truth will be revealed.

Mattokki proverb

M20.9 *erton mursaaajki, tonjilgi
jille!*
When you are lying [to
somebody], remember the
good [he did to you]!
⇒ Don't be tempted to lie!

M22.26 *ittilleg aa nallan goon,
gir bagid ussugi yaa
nalmunu.*
Although they see the
needle, sometimes they
do not see the pole.
⇒ He does not always tell
the truth.

Time and again the topic of lying creeps into conversations I had with Nubians. Neither Andaandi nor Mattokki have a native expression compared to Arabic *wallāhi* that is used to confirm a statement to be true. These days, one often hears the Arabic loanword *wallāhi* in a conversation in Nubian. Nubians wonder what has changed their character and why they have lost their reputation of being trustworthy, so that they have to add *wallāhi*. One Mattokki commented self-critically that in a Nubian environment he did not lie, unlike in an Arab environment.

It is said that when before the *hijra* living closely together Nubians knew each other and were aware that a lie would soon be unmasked. Their talk was *kalām wāḥid* (Ar. 'single talk'), sticking to one's word. These days, people especially in the cities hardly know each other, and so it takes a long time for a lie to be uncovered. Also social media such as WhatsApp und Facebook are

mentioned as spreading lies on an unprecedented scale, leading to becoming accustomed to telling lies.¹⁹⁴⁵

In contemporary society losing one's relationships is very much feared. It is said that if a Sudanese has received an answer, he wants to find out the reasons for that particular answer. If one has to cancel a meeting because of a prior commitment, one may question if one really wants to meet. That may result in a fake answer that leaves no other interpretation. Also in marriage, lying has become permitted if one thinks that it will help maintain the relationship.¹⁹⁴⁶ Ultimately, this does not strengthen relations. As lying increases Nubians lament a decrease in trust in each other.

From a different perspective, lying could be a punishment imposed by God.¹⁹⁴⁷ While that may sound unfamiliar to rational Western enlightenment thinking, it is a reality for Nubians who critically question their communities.

5.6.2. Behaviour toward one's Family

The average Nubian feels first and foremost responsible for his own family and relatives¹⁹⁴⁸ thereby maintaining an honourable reputation. Any family matter such as illness or death is more important than outside appointments or work deadlines. Work may be missed at short notice.¹⁹⁴⁹ On the downside, too many relatives may claim support so that the giver has not enough to care

¹⁹⁴⁵ Dongolawi men 2009+2015, p.c. Method to to uncover a lie: The person lied to waits for the same incident to happen again. Here, confrontation is direct, not via a mediator.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Dongolawi man 2009, p.c. Another Dongolawi man living in Khartoum 2009, p.c. presented one example: If a Sudanese husband asks his wife if she has already eaten, she answers "Yes", even if she hasn't yet eaten. Otherwise she would be afraid that her husband would interpret "No" as a complaint that he is not giving her sufficient money to purchase food.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Mattokki Nubian man 2016, p.c.

¹⁹⁴⁸ Thābit Zāki 2006, p.c.: A Nubian wants money for a good house first in order to provide for his wife and his children.

¹⁹⁴⁹ As experienced by a German NGO worker in the Sudan 2005, p.c.

for his own close family.¹⁹⁵⁰ That leads to deviations from the norm that some proverbs deal with:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A7.8 <i>hambu warrigi ollikirin.</i>
 The doum palm causes shade
 in the distance.
 ⇒ He marries somebody
 unrelated.</p> | <p>M7.1 <i>ambun jowwi tenna
 togoor aagilgi,
 nuunig aa elmunu.</i>
 The one who stays
 under his doum palm
 tree, he does not find
 shade.
 ⇒ He cares more about
 unrelated people than
 about his own family.</p> |
| <p>A7.9 <i>hambu tenn togoogi
 ollikirmun.</i>
 The doum palm does not give
 shade to its lower (part).
 ⇒ He does not care about his
 relatives yet helps others.</p> | <p>M9.1 <i>adel dolindo, garri
 tenn urtindo.</i>
 The good belongs to
 the loved one, the
 bad belongs to his
 [domestic] animals.
 ⇒ He takes good care of
 his friends; however,
 he does not care for
 his own family.</p> |
| <p>A9.11 <i>enn basil on ineenn toodn
 kamir kujmenel.</i>
 Hopefully your food for the
 journey is not put on your
 maternal brother's camel.
 ⇒ I hoped to receive support
 from you, as you are my
 closest relative, however, you
 did not help me. So in future
 you may not expect anything
 from your relatives.</p> | <p>M9.1 <i>adel dolindo, garri
 tenn urtindo.</i>
 The good belongs to
 the loved one, the
 bad belongs to his
 [domestic] animals.
 ⇒ He takes good care of
 his friends; however,
 he does not care for
 his own family.</p> |

¹⁹⁵⁰ In 2020 I became involved when a relative of a Nubian friend blamed my friend for not giving enough to his relatives. In particular, understanding that outside NGO money cannot be distributed to family members is difficult. I do not know to what extent I could explain my Nubian friend's behavior to his relative.

- A16.1 *haaja timbeski koomunu.*
The money does not have a brother.
⇒ He has suddenly become rich and forgets his relatives and former friends who are in need.
- M10.2 *saabki enn unyi dawaa mando anga, gooligi kunyisu.*
[He said to] the cat ‘your excrement is medicine’.
When he said that after digging, he buried [it].
⇒ He is mean and not sharing what would help others, especially his relatives.
- A22.1 *kaa tendi waanyin, irindigi nuurkirin.*
His house is without [roof], because he roofs the [other] people’s [houses].
⇒ He has enough work for himself and his relatives yet helps others.
- M22.2 *abu shaasheen aadelgi aawkooki, tenna kaagi bi alleesu.*
When a wealthy man made the good, he repaired his house.
⇒ If he were honourable, as he claims to be, he would care for his family.
- A22.27 *tenn daadi kus buun, eccelindigi tagirin.*
His vessel remains open, he covers what belongs to others.
⇒ He cares more for others than for his relatives.

5.6.3. General Vices

Apart from not caring for one’s relatives, I assume **greed** instead of generosity to be the second most negative behaviour from a Nubian perspective, as exemplified in the following incident: One Mattokki working in Germany used to send money to his father. The father told him to discontinue it as otherwise God would say to him [the father] afterwards: You had sufficient money and did not take care of your hungry neighbour.

As a result, greed is dealt with in a number of Nubian proverbs:

Andaandi proverb

A12.1 *kaare beerkin, wared belin.*
 When the fish was satisfied, it jumped and got out [of the water].
 ⇒ Don't be greedy and arrogant, instead be modest and humble.

A13.16 *kookiriin.*
 He is similar to the lion.
 ⇒ Similar to a lion he does not share. He is greedy.

A13.18 *goorro toon ajingi oosin.*
 He removes the skin from the ant.
 ⇒ He is greedy/stingy.¹⁹⁵¹

A19.32 *tenn ii sowwedun.*
 His hand is dried up.

A23.6 *buun diili*
 the abundance of those who die

Mattokki proverb

M1.1 *essi duullo, tendo toon aarki, aa baajmunu.*
 In the river, when you take [a bit] from it, it is not finished.
 ⇒ You are wealthy, yet not generous and do not give to other people when asked.

M28.14 *turug balaatir toon ming aa inji?*
 The wind, what does it lift up from the pavement?
 ⇒ Why do you want something from someone who is greedy?

M13.35 *goorro toon des yaa belmunu.*
 The fat does not come out from the ant.

M19.24 *ter beer buun goon, tenn ii essig aa nakkimnu.*
 Although he is satisfied, his hand does not drip water.

¹⁹⁵¹ The following proverbs A19.32, A23.6, A24.5, M13.34, and M19.24 all have the same meaning. A23.6 additionally underlines the mortality of human beings.

A24.5 *ambaab er argonongon gaarigi kalna, er koolangon kumbugi kalna?*

Our father, do you and we eat porridge [from boiled grains] together, and [yet] you eat the egg alone?

A24.6 *karamgi kool gaari uus gojar dogoor genun.*

Porridge with generous people is better than slaughtered [meat] with bad [greedy people].

⇒ A little bit from a generous person is better than a meal from a stingy person.

M21.10 *zool garrin dogoor aa hagreera.*

They look greedier than an evil person.

⇒ Obtaining nothing is better than dealing with a greedy person.

Arrogance is another vice a Nubian should avoid:

Andaandi proverb

Mattokki proverb

A11.1 *fooja kalin, kuru anmun.*

The sparrow eats [a lot], it does not become a turtledove.

⇒ He tries to take a place or post above his position.

M9.5 *kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.*

The camel does not see the curve of its neck.

⇒ He is proud or arrogant for no reason.

A12.1 *kaare beerkin, wared belin.*

When the fish was satisfied, it jumped and got out [of the water].

M9.34 *ur facci buun goon, ewwged min aaw?*

The head is crushed, what [can] he do with the tail?

⇒ He is arrogant.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>A23.12 <i>nugudti galleekan kutte hoossi bittin.</i>
When they praise the slave, he descends and picks up the animal dung.
⇒ When praising oneself or someone else more than necessary, that person will become arrogant.</p> | <p>M21.5 <i>ashirtood edkin goon, yaama bi aawsu.</i>
And if the little pretty one had married, she would have made even more.
⇒ Realising that she is pretty she already behaves arrogantly. How would she conduct herself if she got married?</p> |
| <p>A28.5 <i>guur aagin goon, semagi tabben.</i>
Although he stays on the ground, he touches the sky.
⇒ He shows off / boasts about himself.</p> | <p>M24.6 <i>illen essir toon niidirgi, aa ganderee.</i>
After drinking the water of wheat, he walks arrogantly.
⇒ He is poor yet shows off with a little bit.</p> |

Arrogance is even worse when looking down on old or poor people:

- A16.7 *godarn iri*
people of *godar* material
⇒ The elderly can still do small yet important tasks.
- A22.40 *intille ekkon minelle? aygon andir gambu eri.*
A needle – what are you? While I am – [like] an axe in my things.
⇒ Warning not to despise seemingly insignificant people. They can achieve something that others cannot.

Instead, humbleness is an important Nubian virtue. Frequently when a Nubian man is described positively, it is said that he is humble. When a person from the West is described in a negative tone, I am told that he is not humble.

Curiosity is only dealt with in Andaandi proverbs:

- A5.4 *ekki shegmenendando, beermen!*
Where they did not plant you, do not grow!

⇒ Don't become curious!

A5.15 *aridti guunycil, kashshigi misirmun.*

The one who watches the ground does not fail to notice the dried stalk.

⇒ Curiosity reveals what one would rather not know. Therefore, it is better not to find out everything about other people's lives.

A19.39 *ossi shooro tirtigi arheemun.*

A weak leg is not merciful to the owner [to the human].

⇒ Don't be curious and go to all sorts of places! Your leg will end up hurting.

A22.17 *iri guur buulgi, tenn eyyer digirin.*

He ties the rope that lies on the ground around his neck.

⇒ His curiousness loads him with distant problems.

A straightforward person is favoured due to their aversion to lying. That is why **crookedness** is considered another vice:

Andaandi proverb

Mattokki proverb

A27.10 *ber kerenykiriin.*

He is similar to the crooked wood.

⇒ He is not good. He behaves strangely.

M13.29 *eddig aa nallan goon, tenn*

ettirg aa tigra.

Although they see the hyena, they trace its footprint.

⇒ Why do you not go straight for it?

M22.6 *urbatti korony buul kojir korony buul aa birigi.*

The crooked hole wants a crooked peg.

⇒ An evil person attracts another evil person.

Pride may be positive. There is pride about one's village and country. Parents are proud about their children. At a wedding celebration bride and groom are proud when many guests are present. Sudanese Nubian mothers are proud when they are called *habbooba*. One Mattokki husband proudly stated that he earned enough money so that his wife did not have to work outside of the

home. One old Mattokki woman in Alexandria was proud that her words would travel to Germany after I had written them down. This kind of pride helps many Nubians to endure challenges.¹⁹⁵² Nowadays, there seems to be a lack of sense of pride that carries one through difficult times.

Negatively, one Dongolawi perceives an increase in pride coupled with tribalism. Especially the policy of the National Islamic Front government is blamed for such developments. One Mattokki *imām* notes that since the January 2011 revolution many Nubians have become prouder in the sense of feeling better than non-Nubians. This is the kind of pride that Mattokki proverbs warn against using colourful metaphors:

M9.5 *kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.*

The camel does not see the curve of its neck.

⇒ He is proud or arrogant for no reason.

M9.28 *bertigon saame koo.*

Even the goat has a whisker.

⇒ He is not modest.

M12.1 *er essir aa shugurmenna, er kaareeg aa nalmenna?*
tekefir urki en daajiiirkan, tenn urro toon aa siiyene.

Do you not go down to the river, do you not see the fish? It looks as if it is moving its head, and yet it really stinks [gets rotten] from its head.

⇒ He is proud. // Don't consider yourself clever because you follow your own mind. That is corrupted first.

M12.4 *silbaaya jakki baaninga, garmuut shanabged buurmeesu,*
faracca juu shaygi atta.

When the catfish stamped [the foot] and danced, the sheatfish twisted its barbel, the Nile tilapia went and brought tea.

⇒ He was low, received money and became proud.

¹⁹⁵² Mattokki man in Aswan 2000, p.c.; Dongolawi woman in Cairo 2009, p.c. One *habbooba* from Magaasir Island 2016, p.c.

M24.6 *illen essir toon niidirgi, aa ganderee.*

After drinking the water of wheat, he walks arrogantly.

⇒ He was poor, got a little bit and now behaves proudly. // He is poor yet shows off with a little bit.

M31.3 *ibliiskon tenna nawertigi shukreesu.*

And Satan thanked himself.

⇒ He is proud of himself.

In Andaandi, such warnings against pride are absent.

Mattokki who grew up in pre-*hijra* Lower Nubia do not remember any fear of **theft**. A bag unloaded from the weekly post boat could be left unattended until the recipient was notified and picked it up. In the villages in the Dongola Reach I am curiously observed when I lock the room I am staying in. Nevertheless, there must have been exceptions, as a few proverbs show.

Andaandi proverb

Mattokki proverb

A10.3 *saabki shukreekin, bu magas anin.*
When you thank the cat, it will
become a thief.

⇒ Don't trust that person!

A23.11 *magaski tenn agarn bokkon
tigran.*

They trace the thief until his place.

⇒ No one gets away unpunished.

M19.26 *magasinawre
enna subaagi
aawu!*

Similar to
thieves, move
your finger!

⇒ Do something
without me
noticing!

Nevertheless, it is striking that stealing is absent from the interpretative planes of Nubian proverbs in this collection. Before the *hijra* Nubian children were taught to be absolutely honest:

When the dates began to ripen we children would join the adults in the cool of the evening breeze and would shake the palms so the dates would fall. The owners would pick up the dates. I remembered we were never to snatch up a single date that fell when we shook the trees, even if the owner wasn't watching us. As all our elders kept telling us, "Anyone doing that is covering up the truth and is nothing but a thief."

That kind of behavior was not at all allowed, especially since God himself was watching and would punish the offender.¹⁹⁵³

When I travel in the Sudan and Egypt, Nubians care for me and make great efforts. They worry that the food they offer might not be good enough, that I might not find a wife,¹⁹⁵⁴ or that I may quit my friendships after finishing my research. They are also concerned about their governments, mainly in the Sudan. This kind of **worry** is challenged by some Mattokki proverbs, comparing a human being with a chicken:

M9.31 *ter darbad gaskattigi kaagilnawre teebarked moon buu.*

He, like a chicken that carries an egg, refused to stop.

⇒ He is always nervous and anxious.

M9.33 *darbadn ossigi kal buu.*

He eats the chicken leg.

⇒ He moves restlessly like a chicken.

Again, Andaandi proverbs collected so far do not deal with this topic.

5.6.4. Conclusion

Nubians I talk with draw the conclusion that mainly the introduction of money and the monetary economy in particular has led to a change in the Nubian value system and thus also in their behaviour, exemplified in particular in the section on greed, culminating in social conflicts. Being humble, one of the most positive Nubian character traits, loses its importance. The love of money even causes a decrease in family cohesion and increases competition between Nubians based on ownership.¹⁹⁵⁵ The work of NGOs spending their finances in culturally non-sensitive ways shows similar outcomes:

- One Dongolawi observed Christian NGOs handing out money to churches in Khartoum in 2006. This led Christians to scramble for cash.

¹⁹⁵³ MOHY ELDIN SHERIF 1994.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Especially Nubian women before I became engaged to my future wife in 2006.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Halfawi lady 2009, p.c.; Mattokki men 2016+2018, p.c.; Mattokki woman 2019, p.c. Note that Nubian women also complain about this development.

- In 2006 one retired Halfawi professor reached the conclusion that the many NGOs in Khartoum and especially the UN only helped influential people to increase their wealth. In reality, the poor did not benefit, as described in section 2.3.2.
- At one celebration of the Dongola Association in 2007 a government official participated and promised financial support. I was advised not to take the promise seriously.
- One former vice president of a Sudanese University with a great heart for Nubians told me that he had turned down a grant from a well-known Western NGO, as that Western NGO would have done most of the work.

Therefore, short-term positive developments may be offset by long-term negative results and behavioural changes when putting outside finances into Nubia. It is no good blaming the local people. While a Nubian who stays away from these vices becomes an honoured and well respected member of the community, the outsider has to ensure that such negative behaviours are not encouraged.¹⁹⁵⁶

5.7. Nubian Proverbs and Sacred texts

In order to understand an African world view the Ethiopian philosopher Odomaro Mubangizi encourages the inclusion of a theological perspective.¹⁹⁵⁷ As such a perspective is not that obvious in Nubian proverbs, as seen in semantic domain 31 ‘God’, I take a different approach: I look for parallels and equivalencies between sacred texts and Nubian proverbs.

From about the 6th century onward Nubians were Christians, at least nominally, becoming Muslims from the 14th century onward.¹⁹⁵⁸ In both periods they had their holy books, parts of the Bible were translated into Old Nubian and used in church services, whereas the *Qur’ān* remained in 7th century

¹⁹⁵⁶ This is one of the aspects of Vulnerable Mission (HARRIES 2013 and 2016).

¹⁹⁵⁷ MUBANGIZI 2017: 3. Cf. 2.3.7 ‘Approach toward Faith and Religion’.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Nubians like to discuss why they became Muslims, and when the last Nubian Christian became a Muslim. I do not include these discussions here.

Arabic with the exception of the first Surah. In the northern Dongola Reach at least in the 1950s and early 1960s it was recited in Andaandi.¹⁹⁵⁹

During the first decade of my research nearly all Mattokki Nubians were only cautiously referring to a Christian past. In 2006 one Mattokki assumed that Mattokki lexemes relating to Christianity were forgotten out of fear.¹⁹⁶⁰ Only later did the Christian past and what it meant for contemporary Nubians become a topic. In 2022 even a session on Nubia during the Christian medieval Nubian kingdoms period was held in one of the Cairene Nubian clubs.

When Nubians became more interested in medieval Nubia, I asked a few Andaandi and Mattokki speakers to compare their proverbs with sacred texts. They enjoyed this exercise, as it opened a different approach to understanding their Christian and Muslim history.

In her work on proverbs from western Sudan Salwa Ahmed observes advantages in such an approach “[d]espite the question raised by Whybrary (sic!) about the validity of comparing biblical material with that of different cultures”.¹⁹⁶¹ She liberally compares Sudanese Arabic proverbs and texts mainly from the *Qur’ān* and the *ḥadīth*, explaining:

Proverbs from the Bible and the Quran are analysed elsewhere to illustrate the similarities or differences of moral and religious subjects in the spiritual heritage of the two different cultures.¹⁹⁶²

Such a link between proverbial and religious wisdom becomes even more evident as the Bible contains one book dealing exclusively with proverbs and wisdom sayings collected from different sources in a region that includes

¹⁹⁵⁹ Ordesse Hamed 2016, p.c. Also mosque sermons sometimes were translated into Andaandi.

¹⁹⁶⁰ The topic of fear among Nubians is discussed in section 5.5.5. Additionally there is fear that knowledge of the Christian faith might be interpreted as evidence of being a possible future apostate that during the reign of the Sudanese government under Omar al-Bashir until 2019 was punishable by the death penalty.

¹⁹⁶¹ SALWA AHMED 2005: 9. ‘Whybrary’ (spelling incorrect) refers to the Christian theologian Roger Norman Whybray (1923-1998).

¹⁹⁶² SALWA AHMED 2005: 9.

modern-day Nubia, as indicated by the great overlap of proverbs in the book of Proverbs and Old Egyptian proverbs:

Almost the whole of [the] Proverbs [of Solomon] 22:17-23:14 is closely paralleled in widely scattered sayings in [the Teaching of] Amenemope.¹⁹⁶³

It reflects general ancient Middle Eastern wisdom and a common approach to social justice. Correlations between biblical and Middle Eastern proverbs are therefore not surprising and point to a common environment.¹⁹⁶⁴ The same goes for African proverbs, as a Cameroonian, a South African and a Western scholar show.¹⁹⁶⁵ Following this line of thought I bear in mind:

[P]roverbs are the fossilized slivers of ancient glaciers, ... My initial proposition infers that parallels do not necessarily indicate that a given Armenian folk saying originates from the Bible or is influenced by it. The commonalities may result from having yet older common sources or from common human values and beliefs, ...¹⁹⁶⁶

That is why I do not answer the question, whether a certain proverb is from the Christian or the Muslim period, even if posed by one of the research participants. Instead parallels may refer to a similar environment and link to a former pre-Nubian, pre-biblical or pre-Islamic source. I leave it to the research participants to draw their own conclusions.

¹⁹⁶³ KIDNER 2008: 23.

¹⁹⁶⁴ RIAD AZIZI KASSIS 1999. – DE RUITER (2011: 35+36) sketches rudimentarily the aspect of God and social justice in the biblical book of Proverbs and contemporary proverbs in northern Africa. Further literature is ZAKI and WYATT 2015: 2.

¹⁹⁶⁵ MFONYAM 2014: 10: “African proverbs which in some aspects can be compared to the proverbs in biblical books ...” – BOSMAN 2002. – GOLKA 1994: 7: “After completing my PhD dissertation I started to research biblical proverbs. ... I had become aware of parallels with African proverbs.” – In the German original: “Nach Abschluss meiner Dissertation wandte sich mein Interesse den biblischen Sprichwörtern zu. ... [Mir] war ... klar geworden, dass die biblischen Sprichwörter den afrikanischen sehr ähnlich waren.”

¹⁹⁶⁶ HAGOPIAN 2008: 2.

5.7.1. Proverbs relating to Qur'ānic texts

When beginning his research Ḥāmid Khabīr perceived some Andaandi proverbs to be from Islamic times,¹⁹⁶⁷ such as the following one that allows a man to marry more than one wife as permitted in Islam:

A15.5 *eengi tiwriiged jom!*

Beat the [unruly] wife with a friend!

⇒ If your wife does not treat you well and becomes disobedient, do not physically beat her, but look for another kind of punishment, such as marrying another one.

The next proverb, A2.12, deals with the responsibility of each human being for his own deeds on the day of judgement, another Islamic topic:¹⁹⁶⁸

A2.12 *tatti kikkekin, bosor daamun.*

When the shift [at the waterwheel] is complete, there is no intelligence.

⇒ There will come a time when no one will be able to do any good or bad deed anymore.

A23.10 is based on Islamic law where a murderer has to pay a ransom. A wealthy person is more likely to pay the ransom than a poor one:

A23.10 *fogirkonon asikkiidir daabuuran dogoor, irjeengonon ragabar daaburan genun.*

It is better that the rich are present in the killing than the poor present in the borrowing.

⇒ From a wealthy person you receive the payment, even if it is blood money.

One proverb admonishes to read the *Qur'ān* and take all of it seriously:

A31.8 *goraan koshooshki koomun.*

The *Qur'ān* does not have a useless date.

¹⁹⁶⁷ Similarly, DE RUITER (2011: 14) considers the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīth* as one source of Moroccan proverbs.

¹⁹⁶⁸ This kind of thinking is also experienced in biblical writings. As Holy Bible: New International Version; Matthew 25: 1-13.

⇒ Each Surah of the *Qur'ān* is useful, whether short or long.

The story of the Israelites guided by the prophet Moses/*Mūsa* fleeing from the pursuing Egyptians is told in both, the *Qur'ān* (Surah 2: 50 and Surah 17: 103) and the Bible (Exodus 14). In both accounts, *Mūsa* does not speak, in the biblical text he stretches out his hand, so that the Israelites can cross the sea. By contrast, Nubians relate a proverb that Moses/*Mūsa* uttered when Pharaoh was chasing him and coming near.¹⁹⁶⁹

A1.6 *hutta ekki miirin.*

The sea holds you back.

⇒ As we are quarrelling, may *Allāh* create distance between you and me. // May there be the sea between us, so that you go away.

The story of the prophet Jonah/*Yūnus* fleeing from God is written in the *Qur'ān* (Surah 10: 98 and Surah 37: 139-148) and the Bible (Jonah 1+2). When he was travelling on the boat, God sent a great storm. Whereas in the Bible and in the *Qur'ān* Jonah/*Yūnus* is asleep during the storm and only afterwards, when inside the big fish, prays to God, in the proverb, he immediately prays to the prophet Noah/*Nūh* who remained safe during the great flood.¹⁹⁷⁰

A18.8 *ann nab nuuh, kublir daabuuru.*

My prophet *Nūh*, we are present in the boats.

⇒ We are on a boat and we are afraid of drowning. // Protect us from everything.

Altogether within Andaandi proverbs there is little reference to Islam and its basic text, the *Qur'ān*. For Mattokki proverbs research participants did not even name one reference.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Akram Ḥasan (2016, p.c.) who heard it from his mother.

¹⁹⁷⁰ Akram Ḥasan 2016, p.c. – GREGG 2015 dedicates chapters 10-12 to stories about Jonah/*Yūnus* in Jewish, Christian and Muslim writings. None of these stories relates a prayer while being on the boat or a prayer by Jonah/*Yūnus* to Noah/*Nūh*.

5.7.2. Proverbs relating to Biblical texts

When converting to Islam from the 14th century onward Nubians continued many Christian and even some Pharaonic traditions. Therefore later in his research, yet still before Ḥāmid Khabīr and I became acquainted, Ḥāmid Khabīr additionally considered some Andaandi proverbs to be pre-Islamic. That could mean from the Christian¹⁹⁷¹ or even pre-Christian era. In informal conversations a Jewish past is not mentioned in spite of a former Jewish community on Elephantine Island next to Aswan.

Traces of Christian wisdom in Nubian proverbs may confirm that Christian influence in Nubia continued after the ruling Nubian families and the intellectual elite became Muslims. While ‘the folk’, using Archer Taylor’s term quoted in the introduction to chapter 3, were no longer nourished spiritually by Christian priests, wisdom from the Christian period continued to be transmitted, sitting alongside other transmissions of Christian rituals in Muslim disguise.¹⁹⁷²

I will distinguish between Andaandi and Mattokki proverbs, starting with proverbs and wisdom sayings that are closely related to the biblical book of Proverbs. Here, with some of the proverbs different genres are used: While the Andaandi proverb is a proverb proper the Hebrew biblical one belongs to the instruction genre.¹⁹⁷³ Afterwards I list other proverbs relating to the Old Testament, then to the New Testament.

¹⁹⁷¹ Cf. MIEDER 2015: 35: “... the Bible had an incredible influence on spreading proverbs.” While Mieder is talking about Europe, during the Christian medieval Nubian kingdom period something similar could have happened.

¹⁹⁷² ABDEL HALIM SABBAR 2017: without page number.

Cf. KUMM 1901: 86: “The Nubians know that their country once had Christianity and in one of their proverbs they express the expectation that it will return in days to come.” – In the German original: „Die Nubier wissen’s, daß ihr Land einst das Christentum hatte und in einem ihrer Sprichwörter sprechen sie die Erwartung aus, daß es in kommenden Tagen wieder zurückkehrt.“ Kumm neither quotes the proverbs nor provides any further information. I have not discovered that proverb.

¹⁹⁷³ Hebrew name *mešālīm*. Cf. MCKANE 1985: 3. – Biblical texts are taken from The Holy Bible: New International Version.

- Andaandi proverbs relating to the book of Proverbs

A22.19 *mursin iri urtina.*

The rope of the lie is short.

⇒ One cannot keep up a lie for long. Eventually the truth will be revealed.

Proverbs 12: 19: A lying tongue lasts only a moment.

A16.6 *duulgi koomenil, duulgi jaanin.*

The one who does not have an elder person [relative], buys an elder person.

⇒ The wisdom of the elderly is important for any community, more important than money.

Proverbs 20: 29: Grey hair [is] the splendour of the old [men].

A24.6 *karamgi kool gaari uus gojar dogoor genu.*

Boiled grains with generous people is better than slaughtered [meat] with bad [greedy] people.

⇒ A little bit from a generous person is better than a meal from a stingy person.

Proverbs 23: 6: Do not eat the food of a begrudging host, do not crave his delicacies.

A23.9 *eron gasuweerki dolkin, tokkon fogir irjeen anelnar juumen, irjeen ekolnar juu!*

If you need something, just do not go to one who was poor and became rich, go to the one who has always been rich!

⇒ A formerly poor person never forgets that once he was poor.

The wise man Agur advises in Proverbs 30:21-23: Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: a servant who becomes king, ..., and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

Various male Andaandi speakers reacted similarly when hearing A15.3. It is considered very old, describing the role of women during the Christian period:

A15.3 *een kaan sablo tannan.*

The wife is [like] the large water trough of the house.

⇒ The wife rules the house.

⇒ Nothing in the house happens without the wife being involved.

King Lemuel advises in Proverbs 31: 10+27: A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

In the Old Nubian ‘The Miracle of Saint Mina’ narrative from the Nubian kingdom period where a woman (and not her husband!) decides that she and her family are to be baptised one observes the same kind of respect toward a woman and the freedom of choice she had.

Here, I add two proverbs that link with texts in the book of Ecclesiastes, a book credited to the same author, the Israelite king Solomon.

A1.8 *seregi aaw, urur tir!*

Do the good and give it into the river!

⇒ The good you do will come back to you. // Do the good even if people do not value it. God will definitely appreciate it and you may receive a return, however, how and when is unknown

Ecclesiastes 11: 1: Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return.

A9.4 *nogo gaaligi kamir kujurran gaal, kutte obegi tubkon.*

After they put the expensive female slave on a camel, she descended and swept the dung.

⇒ He advanced to a prestigious position, yet could not stay at that level, and returned to his original position. // Everyone knows his place (status) in society. A slave stays a slave. There is no way to improve one’s place.

Ecclesiastes 10: 7a+16a: I have seen slaves on horseback, ...
Woe to the land whose king was a servant.

In the second Andaandi proverb the slave stays a slave, in Ecclesiastes the emphasis is on the negative outcome of a slave becoming a ruler. As a result,

the interpretation of the Nubian proverb and the sacred text are slightly different.

- Andaandi proverbs relating to other texts of the Old Testament

While the metaphors in A19.41 and the text from Isaiah are the same (bed and blanket), their meanings are different. In the Isaiah text the resources are insufficient:

A19.41 *enn guta kottikirgi, enn ossigi nekke!*

As tall as your [winter] blanket, stretch out your leg!

⇒ Be satisfied with what you have! // You should only talk about what you do and have. Don't boast! // Just buy what your money is sufficient for.

The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 28: 20: The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.

The following proverb has a wider meaning than the Jeremiah text spoken into a very specific situation where a person who is evil in God's eyes cannot do anything good:

A11.1 *fooja kalin, kuru anmunun.*

The sparrow eats [a lot], it does not become a turtledove.

⇒ He tries to take a place or post above his position. Like a doctor's receptionist cannot become a [medical] doctor.

The prophet Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 13: 23: Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?

A15.1 *edkin, burun tineengi ed!*

If you marry, [you] marry the daughter's mother!

⇒ Look at the characteristics of the bride's mother. Her daughter will be similar.

The prophet Ezekiel says in Ezekiel 16: 44: Everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb ... "Like mother, like daughter."

A horn symbolises power, like in the Old Testament, as discussed in semantic domain 23 'Ownership, Finances, and Lack of Both':

- A23.4 *nishshi kinynyi nishshigi koolnar aarin nahaarki.*
One without horn takes along one with horn on the day.
⇒ On the day of judgement, everyone, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the powerless, will be treated equally and receive justice against arbitrariness.
- Andaandi proverbs relating to New Testament texts
- A31.6 *Mowla mallegi men tirin.*
Really [without exception], the Lord cares for all.
⇒ The Lord is the provider for all people.
The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus his Gospel (5: 45): Your Father in heaven ... causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- A9.5 *kam tenn kurunygi nalmun.*
The camel does not see its hump.
⇒ One sees the faults of the others, yet not one's own.
The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus in his Gospel (7: 3): Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?
- A9.29 *tingaarked tiigi kool, sherigked tiinbaabki elin.*
Having a cow on the west [side of the river], he finds the precious pearl on the east [side].
⇒ The fortune of a wealthy person will increase.
The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus in his Gospel (13: 12): Whoever has will be given more, and he will have in abundance.
- A19.36 *sunti kusur toon belmun.*
The fingernail does not come out from the flesh.
⇒ A child remains one's child even if it behaves badly. // Relatives remain relatives even if there is anger.

The proverb is close to Nobiin where it says: “a bone does not break away and separate”.¹⁹⁷⁴ Both are opposite to Arab culture where frequently a child is made to leave when it shames the family. Instead, both, the Andaandi and the Nobiin proverbs, encourage a behaviour that is close to Jesus’ reaction when his ‘children’ are tempted to leave him:

The apostle John quotes Jesus in his Gospel (10: 28): ... no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.

On the surface A13.7 would be an obvious candidate for another saying related to the New Testament:

A13.7 *elumon ekki aarkin, gaare!*

If a crocodile grabs you, embrace [it]!

⇒ The loser should accept the victory of the other until God changes the situation. // If you are in a difficult or dangerous situation, be brave, face it and do not try to escape. // Don’t be afraid of something greater!

When discussing Nubian proverbs with grassroots scholars from different speech communities in Azerbaijan, this proverb left a deep impression. That can be understood in the context of some advice given by the old South American Indigenous pastor Salustiano López:

If someone has done something bad I say nothing to him about it, but embrace him as if I loved him more than the others, so that he can become aware of his error of his own accord. One day he will remember my embrace.¹⁹⁷⁵

However, such a meaning is not intended or no longer known in relation to the above mentioned Andaandi proverb.

¹⁹⁷⁴ Abdel Halim Sabbar 2011, p.c. SULEIMAN OSMAN (2006: 7) presents a Zaghawa proverb with similar meaning.

¹⁹⁷⁵ PAUL and PAUL 2010: 93; in the German original: “Der alte Pastor Salustiano López beschrieb folgende Erfahrung: »Wenn jemand etwas Böses getan hat, sage ich überhaupt nichts zu ihm, sondern umarme ihn so, als ob ich ihn noch lieber hätte als die anderen, damit er sich seines Fehlers von selbst bewusst werden kann. Eines Tages wird er sich an meine Umarmung erinnern.«”

- Mattokki proverbs relating to the book of Proverbs

As with Andaandi, some of the Mattokki proverbs are proverbs proper while their biblical counterparts belong to the instruction genre:

M22.4 *elekken bokon surun dogoor aagi.*

Until now he is sitting on the wall bench.

⇒ Time does not count for this person. // He is lazy.

Proverbs 6: 9: How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?

M22.25 *mursi tagaddi kinyima.*

The lie is without cover.

⇒ A lie cannot be hidden. It will be revealed.

Proverbs 12: 19: A lying tongue lasts only a moment.

M19.35 *abbisin, kaacin gillaabir enn ossi toosu.*

You set a trap, your feet entered in the trap of the house.

⇒ You wanted to cheat, and you were cheated yourself. // When you plan something bad to happen to somebody else, God will let it happen to you.

Proverbs 26: 27: If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it.

M15.2 corresponds to Andaandi proverb A15.3, mentioned earlier. Both relate to Proverbs 31: 10+27:

M15.2 *een kaana jabitera.*

The wife is [like] the channel of the house.

⇒ The wife brings everything good to the house.

- Mattokki proverbs relating to other texts of the Old Testament

M20.2 does not directly refer to the *'īd al-Aḏḥa (kore duul)*, instead it is close to a text from the Old Testament:

M20.2 *gijjarar gojarna dogoor genma.*

Listening is better than slaughtering [sacrifice].

⇒ To hear/obey is better than to feel (the negative consequences).
// Wait and listen before you make a judgement.

Samuel says in the Old Testament, 1 Samuel 15: 22: To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Kind David sings in Psalm 40: 6: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have opened.

M30.4 *uskid ogirro aa taa, tugurgirin goon, aa nogi.*

The birth comes in the [mother's] lap, while he is in a shroud, he goes.

⇒ Worldly possessions are temporary. // Be content with one *jallābiya*, you will not have more when you die.

Job says in the Old Testament, Job 1: 21: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I depart.

M19.37 corresponds to Andaandi proverb A19.41, mentioned earlier. Both relate to Isaiah 28: 20:

M19.37 *enna gataann gedir, enn ossigi middee!*

Fitting to the [winter] blanket, stretch out your leg!

⇒ Be satisfied with what you have! // Just buy what your money is sufficient for.

M15.1 corresponds to Andaandi proverb A15.1, mentioned earlier. Both relate to Ezekiel 16: 44:

M15.1 *edkin, burun tineengi ed!*

If you marry, [you] marry the daughter's mother!

⇒ Look at the characteristics of the bride's mother. Her daughter will have the same characteristics.

- Mattokki proverbs relating to New Testament texts

M14.15 admonishes a Nubian to even love one's enemy as discussed before:

M14.15 *ambaabki beered aagil kaacir taaki, kaa tuur buulgi uskurtiru.*

If the one who killed our father comes to the house, give him what exists inside the house / the goods inside the house.

⇒ Provide the guest with everything, even if he is an enemy.

The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus in his Gospel (5: 45): But, I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

M9.5 corresponds to Andaandi proverb A9.5, mentioned earlier. Both relate to the Gospel of Matthew 7: 3:

M9.5 *kam tenn eyyen arbitg aa nalmunu.*

The camel does not see the curve of its neck.

⇒ He is proud or arrogant for no reason. // One does not see one's own shame and mistakes, only that of others.

M5.3 *seringon aag, ille yaa anmunu.*

And barley remains [barley], it does not become wheat.

⇒ The perfumer cannot put in order what ageing spoils. // You reap what you sow. // One stays what one is.

The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus in his Gospel (7: 16): Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?

Paul writes in the Letter to the Galatians 6: 7: A man reaps what he sows.

M19.28 corresponds to Andaandi proverb A19.36, already earlier. Both relate to the Gospel of John 10: 28.

M19.28 *sutti koccir toon aa belmunu.*

The fingernail does not come out from the top.

⇒ We belong together. // A child remains one's child even if it behaves badly. // Relatives remain relatives even if there is anger. // He remains my friend even if he has done evil.

The next proverb goes right to the centre of the Christian faith where Jesus Christ is believed to have been willing to sacrifice himself for humankind. It is also found with the wise Lucian / Lucaman of Assyria who collected a fable of true friendship where one is willing to sacrifice oneself for another person.¹⁹⁷⁶

¹⁹⁷⁶ AESOP 1993: 198-202.

M9.14 *hanu, tenn afficina joooro, mitarro digir toosu.*

The donkey, because of its children [ass colts], jumped into the well.

⇒ A mother loves her children so much that she is willing to sacrifice anything and to face danger because of them.

The apostle John quotes Jesus in his gospel (15: 13): Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

So far, I have only discovered one Nubian proverb that could be linked to a saying from the Apostle Paul. Neither the proverb nor the saying necessarily have a specific Christian content. I consider it as general wisdom:

M30.10 *oyna tirtii oyked, tekkodon aa oyra.*

As the owner of weeping [the bereaved] weeps, they weep with him.

⇒ He shares the same emotions as his fellow human beings: He cries at a funeral, he shows sadness toward a sick person, he is cheerful at a wedding.

Paul writes in the Letter to the Romans 12: 15: Mourn with those who mourn.

5.7.3. Conclusion and Outlook

In the last section I analysed 15 Andaandi and 14 Mattokki proverbs that to a varying degree relate to biblical texts. These are about 3,5% of all collected Andaandi proverbs, similar in Mattokki. Of them 7 Andaandi proverbs and 4 Mattokki proverbs show parallels to the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Ecclesiastes, both ascribed by Solomon. That does not mean that the origin of biblical proverbs is at the kings' court:

The great majority of these proverbs [in the Old Testament] support the common-sense argument for such proverbs having originated in popular speech.¹⁹⁷⁷

¹⁹⁷⁷ GOLKA 1994: 46; in the German original: "Die große Mehrheit dieser Sprüche stützt vielmehr das common-sense-Argument für die Entstehung von Sprichwörtern im Volksmund."

Among the proverbs showing similarities to the book of Proverbs, it is noted that A15.3 and M15.2 reflect the advanced status of women in medieval Nubia. Here, the Nubian research participants recognised a marked difference to contemporary Arab-dominated culture.

That leaves 8 Andaandi and 10 Mattokki proverbs not connected to the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes for further investigation. Four of those 8 Andaandi proverbs are compared to non-Solomonic Old Testament texts. Three (A11.1, A15.1, A19.41) of the four are general wisdom or not that closely related to the corresponding Old Testament texts, the fourth one (A22.4, ‘horn’) refers to regalia of the Nubian kingdom period, but also in the wider ancient Middle East. Of the remaining four proverbs three are general wisdom (A9.5, A9.29, A31.6). That leaves one Andaandi proverb, A19.36, of special interest: ‘The fingernail does not come out from the top.’ It is paralleled in M19.28.

Of the remaining 10 Mattokki proverbs, four are compared to non-Solomonic Old Testament texts. Three (M15.1, M19.37, M30.4) are general wisdom or not that closely related to the corresponding Old Testament texts; however, the fourth one (M20.2, ‘Listening is better than slaughtering [sacrifice].’) stands out. Nothing comparable is found in Andaandi or Nobiin.¹⁹⁷⁸ When checking with Mattokki speakers, the parallels caused more astonishment than with any other proverb. It contradicts conventional Muslim teaching that slaughtering an animal during the *ʿīd al-Adḥa* is one of the most important tasks: “Slaughtering the sacrifice is better than giving its price in charity.”¹⁹⁷⁹ Instead, this verse is so important that it is repeated many centuries later in the New Testament:

The unknown author in the Epistle to the Hebrews 10: 5 and Hebrews 13: 16 writes: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire ... And do not forget to do good ..., for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁹⁷⁸ For Nobiin: Abdel Halim Sabbar 2011, p.c.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Uthaymeen on the Islamic Q&A website islamqa.info/en/answers/96816/slaughtering-the-sacrifice-is-better-than-giving-its-price-in-charity and islamqa.info/en/answers/36645/slaughtering-the-sacrifice-is-better-than-giving-its-price-in-charity [last accessed on 2 September 2022].

These verses show that the advice given in M20.2 while absent in the *Qur'ān* is very much at the heart of the Old and the New Testament.

Six Mattokki proverbs are linked to the New Testament. M5.3 and M30.10 can be classified as general wisdom. M9.5 and M19.28 are paralleled to A9.5 and A19.36. Really astonishing are M14.15 ('Love your enemy') and M9.14 ('The donkey, because of its children, jumped into the well.') talking about self-sacrifice for someone else, one of the pillars of the Christian Faith.

By and large, the amount of parallels to biblical content is more obvious in the Mattokki than in the Andaandi proverbs, although hardly any historic record about Nubian Christianity among the Mattokki has been handed down in written form, except for a report by a Franciscan monk in 1734 that "may indicate that there were still some Nubian Christians in the region of Aswan"¹⁹⁸⁰ during the time of writing.

One would like to discover reasons for these parallels, also for the omission of the term 'Islam', different from Sudanese Arabic proverbs.¹⁹⁸¹ SAMUEL ALI HISSEIN's (1912a-d) translation of the Gospels cannot be assumed to be a reason as it has not been accepted or used among the Mattokki.

Two possible theories that might explain parallels between Mattokki proverbs and non-Solomonic biblical texts are:

- (1) Dongolawi may have abandoned Christian thoughts and ideas more quickly because they were inhabitants of Dongola city, whereas the hinterland (i.e. Lower Nubia) was slower to follow suit.
- (2) Mattokki may be partly Nubian refugees from Dongola who moved further north to find a place where they could keep their culture and rites alive.

Both theories would fit with the Mattokki language being closely related to Andaandi. It would be paralleled by Kordofan Nubian stories that talk about their ancestors leaving Dongola southward when the Arabs invaded Nubia.¹⁹⁸² History shows that lack of human rights (freedom of speech,

¹⁹⁸⁰ WERNER 2000: 108.

¹⁹⁸¹ As in SALWA AHMED 2005: proverb 81.

¹⁹⁸² GUMMA IBRAHIM and JAEGER 2010.

religion, etc) makes people desert their homeland, even for less fertile places.¹⁹⁸³ So it would have been possible that while some Nubians fled southward, others went to the north. Still, being without priests and the Bible, finally the Mattokki met the same fate as their relatives who had remained in Dongola.

Both theories would fit a history told by a Mattokki from Allaagi village in the Mattokki language shortly before World War I:

The Abisko were here at the beginning. So were the Sûlû, and also the Arokki. These three peoples were Christian. But Neġmeddin and Šerefeddin arrived from Mecca via Aswân. They came and seized the land from them [the Christians] by force of arms. They [the Christians] adopted Islâm and remained living among them [their conquerors]. From their beginnings, therefore, they [the Christians] were scattered throughout the land. These days most have died, and those that have survived are still there, just a few in each village.¹⁹⁸⁴

Also, a Mattokki woman related about the time shortly prior to the *hijra*: Her father showed her the places where the Christians had lived in Debood.¹⁹⁸⁵ To this day, some middle-aged and elderly Mattokki remember the families that were the last to convert to Islam.

Two further theories to be considered are:

¹⁹⁸³ In Central Europe the Waldensians who in the late middle ages moved to difficult-to-access parts of the Alps are one example.

¹⁹⁸⁴ JUNKER and SCHÄFER 1932, 61-62; in the German original: “Die Abisko sitzen von Anfang hier. Und die Sûlû sitzen auch von Anfang hier. Und ebenso sitzen auch die Arokki von Anfang hier. Sie (diese drei Stämme) waren Christen. Aber Neġmeddin und Šerefeddin kamen herab von Mekka über Aswân. Sie kamen und nahmen von jenen (Christen) das Land im Kriege. Sie (die Christen) nahmen den Islâm an und blieben bei ihnen (den Eroberern). Ursprünglich (also) waren jene (Christen) im ganzen Lande; heutzutage ist von ihnen gestorben, wer gestorben ist, und was übrig geblieben ist, sitzt noch da, in jedem Dorf ein paar.” – It remains unclear ‘was übrig geblieben ist’ means. It seems to talk about Kenzi/Mattokki who became Muslims not that long ago before 1910.

¹⁹⁸⁵ Kenzi woman from Debood 2004, p.c.

- (3) In contrast to the Dongola Reach, Lower Nubia had less outside influence as it was by-passed by the camel trading routes: “In the south the incorporation into the Fundj empire was stricter than in the north into Egypt. ... The Kenūzi were the least affected [by the Egyptian conquest of the Sudan].”¹⁹⁸⁶ This was counterbalanced to some extent by the high percentage of Mattokki men finding work in the Egyptian cities with Muslim majority since the 19th century.
- (4) If the Mattokki are Nubianised Arabs, as assumed by some Nubians and Egyptian Arabs, they were influenced by their neighbours from Nubatia where archaeological findings show a wider Christian presence, plus their Coptic neighbours.

The Mattokki proverbs make it hard to tell which theory is more likely. Theory (4) seems highly unlikely, as the few Copts who were living as merchants or craftsmen in Lower Nubia prior to the *hijra* could not have had such influence to help coin these proverbs. One may prefer theory (2); however, that results in the question: Why are there more Arabic loanwords in Mattokki than in Andaandi? Alternatively, a mixture of (1), (2), and (3) plus intermarriage may be worth considering. That would need further insight into Andaandi and Mattokki oral histories.¹⁹⁸⁷

5.8. Proverbs applied to New Situations

While Nubian proverbs literally describe an environment that mainly ended with the *hijra* for the Mattokki and the introduction of electricity and modern transport for the Dongolawi, the proverbs’ interpretations and applications are extended to contemporary Nubian life. Again, I begin with Andaandi proverbs.

For typing and publishing his proverb collections, Ḥāmid Khabīr depended on support from members of the ‘Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage’. While over the years Ḥāmid Khabīr became meticulous in

¹⁹⁸⁶ HERZOG 1957a: 74+62; in the German original: “Im Süden war die Einbeziehung in das Fundj-Reich straffer als im Norden die nach Ägypten. ... Am wenigsten wurden die Kenuzi davon [der ägyptischen Eroberung des Sudan] berührt.”

¹⁹⁸⁷ I started to collect and write them down. They are unpublished.

writing Nubian in Nubian script, they did not always copy correctly from the hand-written script.¹⁹⁸⁸ Time for proofreading was cut short. When discussing the mistakes in the published version together in 2018, Ḥāmid Khabīr assumed the **responsibility** and asked me to apologise to readers. Here, one proverb receives a new interpretation:

A7.1 *bentigon, beriged buun goon, tenn xaraajki kobin.*

Even the date palm, although resting on its side, pays its taxes.

⇒ Even if others mistype the script, the author has to accept the responsibility for it.

Early in my research many Sudanese Nubians were **proud to be Sudanese**. Two even refused European passports because they would have had to give up their Sudanese nationality. Since then the urge to move to Europe without returning has drastically increased. If a Nubian after being retired wants to return to his homeland it causes amazement:

A19.11 *in tenn missigi tenn sarbegeḍ shakkin.*

He rubs his eye with his finger.

⇒ He could continue living comfortably in Europe yet returns to the Sudan.

The Republic of Egypt since 1952 and the Republic of the Sudan since 1956 have had their own presidents as their supreme leaders. Therefore, proverbs are applied to a **president**:

A9.4 *nogo gaaligi kamir kujurran gaal, kutte obegi tubkon.*

After they put the expensive female slave on a camel, she descended and swept the dung.

⇒ Even when a president's seat is offered to a slave, he stays a slave.

As the average **government office** in the Sudan is more easily accessible than in Germany, I had some opportunities to visit them, such as the ministry of culture in Dongola town from 2008 onward. There, I experienced hard-

¹⁹⁸⁸ I myself had the opportunity to compare the original and the type-written versions.

working officials who soon later lost their jobs. However, some other employees were chosen due to their political adherence, and some heads of departments were sitting in front of empty desks. Nubians are aware of such situations:

A22.21 *hukuumagi ashman iriged kallin goon aagin.*

Although he pushes away the government with a rope of bast, he stays.

⇒ He is a civil servant who does not do his work. Neither the government nor the civilians have any benefit from him.

By contrast, among the Mattokki I have not heard proverbs applied to being proud of their nationality. Also proverbs have not been associated with the government or politics.

While many Dongolawi men enjoy discussing politics, most women and Nubian men involved in language development do not want to be seen as **politically** active:

A19.33 *tirgon ollin jomtigi dollan, aygon unyurmun.*

They love the sound of the clapping [applause], and [but] I do not know [want it].

⇒ I do not want to deal with politics.

Women's position and their tasks are changing. Early in my research, I was introduced to Nubian women on the pretext that they were the primary bearers and transmitters of Nubian culture. By contrast, nowadays I hear complaints about women born after the *hijra* that they do not remember how to cook a typical Nubian meal, or do not take the time to bake their own bread. A few Mattokki women even seem to be glad when their husbands travel to Cairo or to the Arab Gulf for work as their absence means less hassle. Also, Nubians increasingly spend time watching television soap operas.¹⁹⁸⁹ In the Dongola

¹⁹⁸⁹ Various Mattokki men 2015 until 2019, p.c.; also a German married to a Mattokki husband 2015, p.c. Most of the men talking about that topic exclude their own wives.

Reach formal schooling is given as a reason that girls and women are much less inclined to perform the tasks assigned to them.¹⁹⁹⁰

Early in 2015 I was invited into a Mattokki home, late in the evening. Due to the cold winter weather the women did not cook a meal, my host did it himself, as described in A9.26:

A9.26 *eengi deewnkaaro undurdaan, hanugi kubir undurdaankirii anoskon.*

Putting a woman into a kitchen has become similar to [as difficult as] putting a donkey on a boat.

⇒ Women no longer want to work in the kitchen.

Since the opening of the paved road between Khartoum and Dongola town around 2008, **travel** has increased significantly. Bus drivers seemed to outrun each other in reaching Dongola first. Therefore, it came as a pleasant surprise that in 2017 the bus from Dongola to Khartoum ran more slowly than before, making the trip in 8 ½ instead of 6 ½ hours. Later we learnt that two weeks earlier a new law had been passed with drastic penalties. That year, a contemporary interpretation of the following proverb was no longer used:

A22.31 *kashshigi kaawirran, iig diin.*

They collect the dried stalks; the fire goes out.

⇒ He is a long-distance bus driver who drives too fast.

Private cars on the road from Khartoum to Dongola still drive very fast, leading to many accidents. In 2022 just before *'id al-Adha* the Andaandi poet Farid Mekkawi died in a car crash near Ed-Debba. On the feast days, instead of celebrating, the Dongolawi I phoned were in mourning. The next contemporary interpretation of a proverb deals with such an event:

A30.13 *sandi buul, tenn baal diin.*

The fearful, his mind dies.

⇒ He is too afraid to travel by plane, travels by car instead, and dies in a car crash.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Hāmid Khabīr 2015, p.c.

Among Nubians Arab children are said to crib frequently in school exams, going against the **rules of honesty**. At college or university research is plagiarized. When lecturing at Khartoum University I aim to convince students to do their own research, or otherwise quote as they would like their own papers to be quoted. One Dongolawi proverb can be applied in such situations:

A28.12 *unattigi aanykired taari gaal, adem malle tirtii ankoran.*

After I came and made the moon alive, they all became its owner [claimed it].

⇒ In Nubian society a patent and its owner are rarely respected.

Nubian men collectively watch and comment on broadcasts of **football matches**. Once, when the goalkeeper of the Egyptian Ahli club saved a controversial penalty in 2002, the Nubian spectators in a teahouse pointed upward and regarded it as a decision of God. In such situations the next three proverbs are applied, showing similarity of European and Nubian spectators:

A19.34 *ii essir daa buul, iigir daa buulkiriimun.*

The hand that is in water is not similar to [the hand] that is in fire.

⇒ He watches football on TV and thinks he knows better how to play it than the football team.

A21.8 *gurratti moonkin, guureer moonin.*

When the joy refuses [to come to you], the fertile soil refuses [it also].

⇒ Even a very good football player needs luck in front of the goal.

M9.19 *er adder hanuweerki undurus!*

You insert a donkey for me!

⇒ 1:0. You won the game.

In the first decade of my research religion formed an integral part of Nubian daily life. Critical theological research was unwelcome. It was mainly with the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt 2012/2013 and the longevity of the Islamist government in the Sudan, that young Nubians in particular started **questioning religion**, or the appearance of religion:

- Does religion hinder development of a country?¹⁹⁹¹
- Why was Aspirin invented in the West and not in the Sudan? Does religion play a role in this?¹⁹⁹²
- All religions have violent elements.¹⁹⁹³
- Members of one religion should not talk negatively about other religions.¹⁹⁹⁴
- In 2003, Christians came to Darfur and brought food and other life's necessities. At the same time *imāms* taught that these Christians were going to hell. That did not make sense. One lady was even cured of malaria after a prayer by a Christian.¹⁹⁹⁵
- Why doesn't Islam in the Sudan influence the driving style and lead to fewer fatal car accidents?¹⁹⁹⁶
- It would be better if people didn't adopt their parents' religion, but could choose one at the age of 18 to 21.¹⁹⁹⁷

It is not surprising that a critical view of religion becomes one contemporary interpretation of a proverb:

A22.15 *iri jagadn keello merin.*

The rope tears at the place of weak[ness] / at the weakest place.

⇒ The weakest part of a religion determines whether it is good or not.

¹⁹⁹¹ Young Mattokki with formal schooling, 2011; p.c. His father answered that in Egypt most Muslims were descended from former Christians who changed their religion to avoid paying the Islamic *jizya* tax on non-Muslims. – The questions are sorted chronologically.

¹⁹⁹² Sudanese man with experience in studying in the Communist bloc and living in many countries, 2015, p.c.

¹⁹⁹³ Dongolawi man living in Europe, 2015, p.c.

¹⁹⁹⁴ Devout Sufi 2017, p.c.

¹⁹⁹⁵ A female Muslim Darfuri refugee in close contact with Nubians, 2018, p.c.

¹⁹⁹⁶ Dongolawi man 2020, p.c. Ten years before he had said that one should not ask critical questions about Islam.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Young adult Fadijja man 2020, p.c.

Modern **travel** and communication bypass former geographical challenges. When I received a phone call from one Dongolawi from Poland, and a couple of hours later from the same person from France, a proper reaction would have been a Mattokki proverb:

M11.6 *koog nawikke sib daajii.*

Like a raven, you fly and roam.

⇒ You surprise me (due to receiving phone calls from the same person from different places within a short time span).

About 1938 the first Dongolawi Nubian left to find work in **Saudi Arabia**. On arrival did some of them discover that work conditions could be really bad. Some women wait for years until their husbands return, like before them the Mattokki women whose husbands went to the Egyptian cities for work. On their return, Nubians bring with them finances to construct mosques and kindergartens. Religion changes from being taught according to Nubian mystic Sufism to Saudi Salafism. Also, the decrease of food security in the Sudan is attributed to the fact that much of agricultural food is produced for the Arabian Peninsula and therefore not available for the Sudan's own population.¹⁹⁹⁸

While the next Mattokki proverb most likely initially referred only to Arabs in the sense of Bedouins or the nomadic Ababda, all these negative perceptions led its meaning being extended to the inhabitants of Saudi Arabia:

M30.3 *arabi jarabi.*

Arabs [are like] skin diseases.

⇒ Arabs from Saudi Arabia are regarded as distasteful people.

I am not aware whether this Mattokki proverb or the corresponding Andaandi proverb A30.4 is known by any Arab. According to the principle of *sutera*, it would not be mentioned when Arabs are around.

European literature and novels are becoming known in Egypt and the Sudan. One interpretation of a Mattokki proverb refers to Don Quixote, the main character of a Spanish novel from 17th century:

¹⁹⁹⁸ Mattokki *imām* 2012, p.c.; Sudanese man living in Europe 2017, p.c.; Andaandi woman 2019, p.c.

M6.2 *hewaagi joorin goon, daajii.*

While he harvests the air, he roams aimlessly.

⇒ He behaves like Don Quixote.

Proverbs with a high percentage of Arabic loanwords may be an indicator of being more contemporary. M28.4 was sung by Ḥasan Ghazūli. It refers to the **cultural shift** the Mattokki experienced when leaving Lower Nubia and moving to the Kom Ombo area:

M28.4 *ajjibee, woo dunya, ajjibee, aygi diimee aa hayyireera,
ghaaligon aa raxiseera, raxisgon aa ghaalieera.*

Strange, o world, strange, they always scare me,
the expensive [things] become cheap,
and the cheap [things] become expensive.

⇒ Nubian values are changing, especially in post-*hijra* Nubia, as the sense of belonging together as a family.

The Dongolawi and Mattokki I talked with did not remember any proverb being applied specifically during the **Covid-19 pandemic**. This could be due to the few Covid-19 cases in the Nubian villages where the Nubian languages are spoken. The virus was more prevalent in the urban centres where Nubians went to work, and Covid-19 rules were transmitted by young people who use far fewer proverbs than the elderly generation.¹⁹⁹⁹

Proverbs may alter in order to adapt to new situations. In semantic domain 4 ‘Water in General’ I discussed the **shift of proverb** M4.3 to another wording, and the reasons behind it:

M4.3 old *mandon essigi niidil, walla wide aa taamnu.*

Nevertheless the one who drinks the water of there [foreign place] does not return and come [home].

⇒ A Nubian who moved to another place is unlikely to return.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Mukhtār Aḥmad 2023, p.c. For more information about Nubian remedies during the Covid-19 pandemic, see semantic domain 30 ‘Life, Calamities and Death’.

variant (new) *mandon essigi niidil, awwittiged aa taa.*

The one who drank the water of there [outside] comes a second time.

In the same strain it could be analysed whether further variants also imply a shift of environment and meaning.

5.9. Stylistic Features

Proverbs and wise sayings are kept short and concise, yet their language is forceful. Every word is relevant. In general, the average length of a proverb consists of seven words.²⁰⁰⁰ Andaandi sayings in this collection are between two (A1.1) and fourteen words (A2.1) in length; Mattokki sayings between two (M1.19) and seventeen words (M12.1). Other long Mattokki sayings are M28.6 (fifteen words), M5.7 (thirteen words), M13.26 and M26.1 (twelve words). Andaandi has less lengthy sayings. Almost all of them have some stylistic features.²⁰⁰¹

Unsurprisingly, **Parallelism** is one of the most frequent stylistic features. It balances or mirrors one clause by another one and thus helps recollection, as in the following three examples taken from Andaandi:

A22.8 *deski tabbelgon densir anin, katregi tabbelgon katre anin.*

While the one who touched the fat, becomes full of goodness;
the one who touched the wall, he becomes a wall.

A24.3 *kaltigi kalmun, essigi niimun.*

He does not eat the food, he does not drink the water.

In A24.3 the two clauses show ‘synonymous parallelism’. There is syntactical and morphological parallelism (Object – Verb and NEG-3SG).

A13.5 *irin jelligi aawiran, iccingi eewir aarrankiriin.*

Doing the work of [other] people is like grabbing the tail of a scorpion.

²⁰⁰⁰ MIEDER 2004: 7.

²⁰⁰¹ Due to similarities between poetry and proverbs an unpublished glossary on poetic features by SALISBURY 2007 proved to be helpful.

In A13.5 besides ‘morphological parallelism’ between both verbs (NEUTR-3PL) there is ‘phonological parallelism’ as both object phrases and verbs begin with the same letter.

Two examples from Mattokki are:

M20.6 *nii weemaa? allo weesa.*

Who said it? They just said it.

The two clauses show ‘synonymous parallelism’ as both question and answer consist of two words, and ‘lexical parallelism’ as the lexeme *wee* occurs in both clauses.

M18.7 *tallosee daande, boodosee genma.*

If there is an [opportunity for] leaving, running is better.

Here, there is ‘morphological parallelism’ as the first words in both clauses are glossed morphologically V-PFV-NR.

A special kind of parallelism occurs in:

A9.29 *tingaarked tiiḡi kool, sherigked tiinbaabki elin.*

Having a cow on the west [side of the river], he finds the precious pearl on the east [side].

A9.29 shows underlying parallelism with the two words *tii* ‘cow’ and *tiinbaab* ‘pearl’ sounding similar.

Some conditional clauses can also be regarded as parallelism. Cross parallelism (chiasmus) does not occur in the Nubian sayings.

Antonyms create ‘antithetical lexical parallelism’ and thus heighten the contrast:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>antonym</u>	<u>translation</u>
A5.10	<i>kaan jer – kaan ogol</i>	back of house – front of h.
A5.14	<i>wide – kiddi</i>	swim – drown
A7.10	<i>ursekool – faawir</i>	with root – without root
A9.2	<i>kamduul – kamtood</i>	old camel – boy camel
A9.13	<i>mursin kaj – aleen kaj</i>	horse of lie – horse of truth
A14.12	<i>uskel – tood</i>	parents – child

<u>proverb</u>	<u>antonym</u>	<u>translation</u>
A20.1	<i>banynyiid – kitterar</i>	talking – silence
A21.3	<i>seree – milli</i>	good – bad
A26.3	<i>dullo – shooro</i>	heavy – light
M1.21	<i>tingaar – mali</i>	west – east
M9.1	<i>adel – garri</i>	good – bad
M9.34	<i>ur – ew</i>	head – tail
M19.17	<i>gony ... kuj – battil ... shugur</i>	build ... be.up – pull.down ... get.off
M20.3	<i>owwel – xaar</i>	first – last
M26.5	<i>teeg – imbel</i>	sit – stand up
M30.4	<i>uskid – tugur taa – nog</i>	birth – shroud come – go

In Andaandi antonyms occur most frequently among proverbs dealing with farming (semantic domain 5) and domestic animals (semantic domain 9). In Mattokki proverb M30.4 both clauses begin with a pair of antonyms: *uskid* ‘birth’ and *tugur* symbolizing ‘death’; and close with a pair of antonyms: *taa* ‘come’ and *nog* ‘go’. At the same time they are creating an antithesis:

M30.4 *uskid ogirro aa taa, tugurgirin goon, aa nogi.*
 The birth comes in the [mother’s] lap,
 while he is in a shroud, he goes.

Antithesis can also work without antonyms:

A14.12 *uskelndigon toodir gaarin, toodndigon berro gaarin.*
 While the one who gave birth embraces the child,
 he [the child] embraces the wood belonging to the child.

Repetition (or reduplication) occurs in regard to rhythm or sound. Repetition of words usually points to a key word, yet is not always distinguishable from ‘lexical parallelism’. Two examples from Andaandi are:

A20.6 *wicciirn iir dabin, banynyiidn iir dabmunu.*
 The mark of the stick disappears, the mark of talking does not
 disappear.

A21.6 *goski goski terkirii dolmun.*

The desiring one does not like the one who desires similar to him.

In both clauses the root of a word is repeated. In A20.6 in both subclauses words are nearly in the same position, as in the proverbs in the following table. In A21.6 repetition occurs at the beginning, as in other African languages.²⁰⁰²

<u>proverb</u>	<u>repetition</u>	<u>translation</u>
A5.14	<i>weerkon ... weerkon</i>	one=CO
A15.1	<i>edkin, ... ed</i>	marry
A16.6	<i>duulgi ..., duulgi</i>	elder=ACC
A17.5	<i>mingi kallu? mingi niiru? ...</i>	What shall we eat? What shall we drink? ...
A20.9	<i>... enn ...gi oroofegir..., enn ...gi oroofegir...</i>	... your ...=ACC cold-CAUS
A20.11	<i>tawtaawmenel, kashkaashmenel, ... waasmenel</i>	-NEG-PTC:PF
A22.9	<i>ogjin olli ... katren olli</i>	men's shade ... wall's shade
M23.1	<i>indi ..., bi indi ...</i>	belong to you (PL)
M25.3	<i>... naleli, ... nalsa.</i>	to see
M25.5	<i>... wirijkin, ... wirijminu.</i>	naked

In A10.7 the root is repeated three times with two different meanings:

welgi eewkon, tenn eewgi eewin.

He **sent** the dog, [the dog] **sends** its **tail**.

Also, in M30.10 the root is repeated three times:

oyna tirtii oyked, tekkodon aa oyra.

As the owner of **weeping** [the bereaved] **weeps**, they **weep** with him.

²⁰⁰² FINNEGAN 1970: 400.

The following table lists proverbs where the root of a word is repeated within the same proverb, but the root's suffixes are different:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>repetition</u>	<u>translation</u>
A28.10	woo uun unatti .	crescent moon
M1.14	tuubaren ... tuubosru .	to wade
M20.4	weereen weeree ...	talk
M23.4	dugun dugur ...	money
M22.6	... korony buul kojir korony buulgi ...	crooked
M22.23	... tagaddi aa tagri .	to cover

Rhyme is a special form of repetition with similar sounding syllables, occurring all over the Sudan:

Sudanese proverbs are rich in rhymes and rhythms that show their literary depth and give them fluency and smoothness.²⁰⁰³

Due to the similarity of the suffix '-kin' of a conditional clause and '-in' or '-n' (both 2nd or 3rd person) of a simple clause, rhymes can easily be crafted:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>rhyme</u>	<u>translation</u>
A1.13	<i>shugur-ki-n – waandi-n</i>	descend – appear
A5.2	<i>ewir-ki-n – shugur-in</i>	plant – descend
A7.2	<i>boor-ki-n – tarki-n</i>	collapse ... lean.against

Note that in A7.2 the first *-ki* is a suffix, the second *ki* is part of the verbal root.

A9.1 has the same tense, mood and number of syllables in each clause:

wel uukkin, kam nogin.

The dog barks, the camel walks.

In A9.16 the rhyme is created as both verbs end in the same long vowel, and both clauses have the same number of syllables:

²⁰⁰³ SALWA AHMED 2005: 231.

hanugi bee, welged ashee.

He kills the donkey; it is the evening meal for the dog.

In Mattokki, the COND suffix *-ki* is not used as part of a rhyme. Instead, rhymes are based more on similar sounding words:

M1.15 *essin tuubar toon kiddark aa sarki.*

From ‘wading’ in the [shallow] water he fears drowning.

<u>proverb</u>	<u>rhyme</u>	<u>translation</u>
M9.1	<i>dolindo – urtindo</i>	love-POSS – domestic.animal-POSS
M20.6	<i>weemaa – weesa</i>	say-Q:PRT – say-PRT2-3PL
M18.6	<i>tallel – nali</i>	go-PTC:IPF – see-3SG
M18.7	<i>tallose – boodose</i>	go-PFV-NR – run-PFV-NR

Alliteration refers to the purposeful repetition of similar sounding consonants. The sound may be at the beginning, end, or middle of the word:

A5.16 *kamkoro shukkikin, korodton gaawin.*

When the [animal] dung sinks, and the pebbles ascend.

A18.15 *doltin dawwi dollin, nogil malle duurmun.*

The way of love is difficult, not all who walk [on it] reach [its end].

Andaandi puns in subchapter 4.32 are further examples.

Three Mattokki alliterations are:

M14.4 *afficigodon kashkikin, kandiged kashku.*

If you play with children, you play with a knife.

M20.2 *gijrar gojarna dogoor genma.*

Listening is better than slaughtering [sacrifice].

M23.4 *dugu dugun dogoor aagi.*

Money stays on top of money.

Ellipsis refers to the omission of a word or a phrase. It makes a proverb more concise. The existence of ellipsis indicates that proverbs are only meaningful

in a given context where the missing element can be deduced by the listener. It occurs both in Andaandi and in Mattokki. A verbal ellipsis is found in:

A18.14 *inn aar, inn mushra.*

Your (PL) bank, your (PL) mooring.

The proverb consists of two noun phrases without any verb. Grammatically the sentence remains incomplete.

The following elliptical clauses consist of two conditional clauses, with the main clause missing:

A5.16 *kamkoro shukkikin, korodton gaawkin.*

If the [animal] dung sinks, and if the pebbles soar.

5.10. Internal Features

In Nubian proverbs internal features are used less frequently than stylistic features. Internal features create a figurative language where meaning is conveyed in a non-literal way.²⁰⁰⁴ A figure of speech can state one instance representing other situations, thus making a proverb easily adaptable and widely applicable:

A general or abstract idea is conveyed not through any direct generalization at all but through a single concrete situation which provides only one example of the general point.²⁰⁰⁵

²⁰⁰⁴ While analysing internal features of proverbs SALISBURY 2007's unpublished glossary of poetic features also proved helpful. Also WALTKE 2004 is referred to.

The interpretative use of figurative language is explained in BLAKEMORE (2002: 126), based on relevance theory: "... every utterance is an interpretation: it is a public representation of a private representation, that is, a thought. The relationship between the propositional form of an utterance and the thought it represents is not one of identity, but rather of resemblance, so that literal resemblance is a limiting case rather than the norm. Hence the possibility of metaphor ... Whereas in cases of descriptive language use, the thought interpreted is entertained as a description of a state of affairs ..., other utterances must be analyzed as interpretation of thoughts which are themselves interpretative representations of other thoughts. Ironic utterances ... fall within this category."

²⁰⁰⁵ FINNEGAN 1970: 397.

... mapping of one script (the known) on to another (the unknown) so as to make the latter known.²⁰⁰⁶

This enhances politeness, respect and honour. Similes, metaphors and other figures of speech can act as place holders for words otherwise taboo. They support zooming in of certain aspects and zooming out of others. They can have different meanings in different societies and thus tell us something about the common ground proverbs are based on – otherwise they could not be comprehended.

With each kind of internal feature I list some figures that tell us about the Nubian societies' interests and identifications. Comprehending these figures allows some amount of insight into Nubian society.

The **simile** was introduced in section 3.11.3 'Case Marking'. A simile "likens a topic to something more vivid or more able to be pictured."²⁰⁰⁷ It uses an overt marker such as 'like' or a similar syntactical construction. No complete similarity is implied. In African proverbs similes "occur fairly often".²⁰⁰⁸

In Andaandi, a simile is represented by the clitic =*kirii* (glossed by SIM) or the lexeme *galig*:

A1.15 *demiiren turugkiriin*.

He is similar to the [strong] wind of the Nile flood.

A13.2 *kaag karrigi galigin*.

The snake resembles the female [person in her shape].

In Mattokki, a simile is represented by the clitic =*nawre* (glossed by SIM) or the lexeme *nawitte* and its variant *nawikke*:

M9.32 *ter me darbadinawre aa findi?*

Isn't it that he pecks similar to a chicken?

M11.6 *koog nawikke sib daajii*.

Like a raven, you fly and roam.

²⁰⁰⁶ OHA 1998: 90.

²⁰⁰⁷ SALISBURY 2007.

²⁰⁰⁸ FINNEGAN 1970: 396.

The following table lists some similes and their meanings. Shared “cultural representations”²⁰⁰⁹ among the Dongolawi and the Mattokki can be discovered. The same goes for later tables that record other internal features:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>simile</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A1.15	wind of the Nile flood	unsteady person
M1.19	wind of the Nile flood	aggressiveness
M9.6	horse and snake	constant fighting
M9.31+M9.32	chicken	moving restlessly
M11.5	raven and spider	constant fighting
M11.6	raven	moving quickly
A13.5	grabbing a scorpion by the tail	difficulty, danger
A13.16	lion	greed
M13.2	snake	crooked person
M19.26	thieves	working without being noticed
A28.8	star in the darkness	well-known person

The number of proverbs containing animals as a simile is remarkable.²⁰¹⁰

In a **metaphor** the figure is made less obvious as the comparison is not marked by ‘like’ or a similar syntactical construction. Metaphors are “most frequent” within African proverbs.²⁰¹¹ The same goes for Andaandi:

A15.3 *een kaan sablo tannan.*

The wife is [like] the large water trough of the house.

⇒ The wife rules the house. // Nothing in the house happens without the wife being involved.

²⁰⁰⁹ ENFIELD 2000: 45.

²⁰¹⁰ A21.6 compares one ‘desiring’ person with another one marked by =*kirii*. It is not included, as two equals are compared, thereby not fulfilling the definition of a simile.

²⁰¹¹ FINNEGAN 1970: 396.

The following table lists further metaphors and their meanings in Andaandi proverbs. I exclude metaphors from the realm of animals as they have already been listed in subchapter 5.3 ‘Animals as Metaphors’:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>metaphor</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A1.14	men’s disease	bad behaviour
A2.5	water	profit
A5.17	geographical borders	rules of politeness
A6.3	no wind	harmony
A7.10	[palm] roots	good family roots
A7.11	<i>kulma</i> date – thorn	something wonderful – little bit dangerous
A8.1	acacia tree	bad behaviour
A9.35	knife	enmity / envy
A9.36 + A23.4	horn	responsibility / power
A14.11	guest ²⁰¹²	temporariness, economic burden
A15.3	large water trough	highest importance
A18.15	way	emotion
A19.8	stone + eye	stumbling block, anything in one’s way + responsibility
A19.16 + A19.17	tongue	(persuasive) talking + interference
A19.38	content of stomach	secret
A19.37	back	<i>was̄ta</i>
A20.1	silver	value
A20.1	gold	great value
A20.9	to be cold	to take a rest

²⁰¹² There are other instances where ‘guest’ represents the more positive context of ‘generous hospitality’ and a challenge to honour. (cf. A17.2 and M14.10)

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<u>proverb</u>	<u>metaphor</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A22.16	twist of a rope	important item
A22.25	pumpkin [full] of water	liveliness
A22.29	smoke	news
A22.30	fire of dried stalks	bad foundation
A22.31	fire + stalks	energy fuelling a young man's life
A22.40	axe	importance
A25.3	turban	braveness, generosity
A27.5	shirt of iron	bravery
A27.11	incense of acacia	anything unknown
A28.6	earth	reality
A28.15	hill – wind	strong individual in terms of status/power – problem caused by weak person
A30.4	skin disease	distastefulness
A30.4	knife	danger
A30.4	odour of tar	distastefulness

In Mattokki metaphors are slightly less frequently used:

M7.5 *ashmaann iigma.*

It is [like] a fire of date palm fibre.

⇒ He is getting angry easily, but also quickly appeased.

M14.10 *buru ishkartima.*

A daughter is [like] a guest.

⇒ Everything is done for a daughter.

M15.2 *een kaana jabi tera.*

The wife [like] is the channel of the house.

⇒ The wife brings everything good to the house.

The following table lists further Mattokki metaphors and their meanings:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>metaphor</u>	<u>meaning</u>
M1.4	river	wisdom and good things
M1.16	season after flood	difficult time
M4.2	dirty + pure water	anger / no anger
M5.6	manure	bad talk
M7.6 + M7.7	thorn	little bit dangerous
M16.1	writing of the hand	character
M19.25	water	alms and gifts
M9.27	knife	enmity/envy
M19.29	back	<i>waṣṭa</i>
M19.39	black	unlikeable
M19.42	urine	faults
M21.12	wall	mistake
M22.16	ash ²⁰¹³	unlawful money
M22.18	dust + ash	evil person
M25.2	turban	braveness, generosity
M27.1	iron	ugly clothing
M27.4	stone	anything negative
M28.9	moon	good atmosphere
M28.12	sun	truth
M28.13	wind	problem
M30.4 + M30.5 + M30.8	shroud	death / possessions of a very poor person

A **metonymy** refers to substituting one item with an associated item. It requires “additional culture specific information, so that we do not make a misstep”.²⁰¹⁴ It provides insights into Nubian society, its unconscious mapping between an object and a human being or an abstract concept.

²⁰¹³ ‘ash’ may represent a concept or a person.

²⁰¹⁴ AASLAND 2009: 9.

Examples are from Andaandi only; Mattokki proverbs with metonymy are listed further below among synecdoche:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>metonymy</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A2.4	yoke	work
A6.5 + A10.6	your leavened flour	female relationship
A11.6	eyes of an oriental turtledove	beautiful blue eyes
A14.2	child	one's material and non- material belongings
A15.5	friend	second wife
A16.6	elder	elder's wisdom
A18.1	captain	leader
A18.3 + A23.3	boat + peg / flour + fire	basic necessities of life
A24.9	okra + chicken	modest meal + better food
A29.1	to enter a dance	to begin a task

A subset of metonymy is **synecdoche** where a part represents the whole. Mainly body parts are used to symbolise the whole human being, except for A14.8 and M8.1:

A14.8 ***bitaan timbaabki giirin.***

The child surpasses his/her father.

The child represents any pupil, the father represents any teacher.

A19.30 ***ii er iski iwismeningi doog!***

Kiss the hand you are not able to twist!

The hand represents an influential human person.

M8.1 ***esheyn ambarte boodkin, tenn agaabir bood!***

When the halfa grass of your [home] village runs [away], run behind its back!

The halfa grass so common in Nubia represents the whole homeland ('Heimat').

M15.5 *eecin ulug kus buu.*

The ear(s) of women are open.

The ear represents any woman.

M19.17 *aa gonyil kuj buu, aa battelgon shugur buu.*

The heart that built is lifted up and the heart that destroyed is down.

Other occurrences are:

- A19.16 (‘tongue’), A19.27 + A19.32 (both ‘hand’), A19.31 (‘empty hand’), A19.39 (‘weak leg’), A19.40 (‘leg of the weak’), A20.9 (‘leg’), A27.9 (‘head’).
- M7.7 (‘leg’), M19.7 (‘eye’ and ‘eyebrow’), M19.9 (‘eye’ and ‘ear’), M19.22 + M19.24 + M19.26 (all ‘hand’), M19.25 (‘finger’), M19.35 + M19.36 (both ‘foot’).

Personification portrays an animal, another non-human object or an abstract idea acting or behaving as if it were a human being:

<u>proverb</u>	<u>element</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A2.9	young bull	child
A3.3	channel + basin	person first served
A5.8	grain	person who was away for a long time
A5.10	unripe millet + nearly ripe wheat	neighbour + relative
A7.3	tall date palm	old person
A7.5	moist palm branch	young person
A7.6	dry palm branch	adult
A7.8	doum palm	person with far reaching influence
A7.9	doum palm	person not caring for relatives
A9.5	camel	any person

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<u>proverb</u>	<u>element</u>	<u>meaning</u>
A9.36	bull	any person
A10.7	dog dog's tail	person of low status person of even lower status / subordinate
A11.1 + A11.3 + A11.4	sparrow	person of low status
A11.1 + A11.3	turtledove + <i>sant</i> acacia	person of high status
A12.3	sheatfish + mullet	powerful person + less powerful person
A13.3	snake + scorpion	woman
A13.4	scorpion	harmful person
A13.9	crocodile	diligent parent
A22.26	jar	relative
M1.1 + M1.2	river Nile	important/wealthy person
M1.8	river + mud of river	father + son
M2.2	bucket with a hole	person not accepting advice
M5.4	onion	bad people
M9.4	ant + camel	person of low status + of high status
M9.5	camel	person holding himself in high esteem
M9.6 + M11.1	horse and snake + raven and spider	people fighting each other
M10.1	cat	wrong person
M13.5	scorpion + young scorpion	evil person + very evil person
M13.28	dog	common people

<u>proverb</u>	<u>element</u>	<u>meaning</u>
M13.29 + M13.31	hyena	person with negative character

Paradox is a proposition that contradicts itself and therefore is opposite to the listener's expectations. The connector *goon* may be part of such a proverb:

A9.33 *ghaayibn tii gurki uskin.*

The cow of the absent [person] gives birth to the bull.

⇒ The one absent from home for a long period has fewer children than others.

A19.42 *tekki shegin, geewgi ettamun.*

[Although] He pierces him, he does not bring the blood.

⇒ Blood normally comes out when the skin is punctured. However, this person is different: Any well-intended advice does not affect his behaviour.

A28.5 *guur aagin goon, semagi tabben.*

Although he stays on the ground, he touches the sky.

⇒ The one below cannot touch the sky. In the same way he wants to achieve a high position without exerting any effort.

M1.10 *eshey kursosingad, essi ongoogir asharossum.*

When the land grew old, the water [turned direction and] flew southward.

⇒ The river Nile normally flows in a northerly direction. A change in the direction shows that everything has become topsy-turvy.

M25.4 *wirij buun goon, kasirked deged aagi.*

Although he is naked, he has put on a turban.

⇒ The turban is put on last. So this person does tasks in the wrong order, the unimportant task before the important one.

Further occurrences of paradox as internal feature are:

- without *goon*: A5.16 A6.5 A8.2 A22.31 A23.1 M5.5 M14.1 M24.10 M28.16.

- with *goon*: A7.1 A9.17 A19.4 A22.24 M1.21 M19.24 M22.3 M22.23 M28.11.
- as rhetorical questions: A13.12 M10.7 M13.22 M13.25 M24.7.

Hyperbole, overstatement, and deliberate exaggeration create a dramatic effect. They increase the vividness of imagery and the emotional impact, as in:

A9.27 *tiinci ewirkan, kajli kalan.*

When the cows cultivate, the horses eat.

⇒ While cows cultivate and work hard, others eat what the cows' work brings forth. In the same sense, one person benefits from somebody else's hard labour.

A13.18 *goorro toon ajingi oosin.*

He removes the skin from the ant.

⇒ The ant is so tiny that its skin amounts to nothing. No one could make use of it, unless someone is penny-pinching.

M4.5 *falgon essir aa kiddi.*

He drowns in the water of the 'falgo' [span of hand].

⇒ Not even a baby would drown in the water of a span of hand. Therefore, he is most unlucky.

M14.3 *ogij, ondigi usked aagil, aa diimnu.*

The man [father] who[se wife] has given birth to a male [son], he does not die.

⇒ Everyone must die. However, the one who leaves behind a male successor will not be forgotten.

Altogether hyperbole is used more in Mattokki than in Andaandi. Further occurrences are:

- A6.4 M1.22 M9.14 M9.15 M13.1 M13.34 M19.31 M22.14 M30.8.

Some of the internal features in these proverbs could also be analysed as paradox. There is a certain area of overlap.

Irony including mockery, ridicule and sarcasm is intended to convey scorn. It occurs in humorous expressions, as when highlighting foolish behaviour.

The literal translation describes something crazy or unrealistic, and its intended meaning is probably its opposite:

A15.4 variant *waasogi essin seller shegin.*

He pierces the leveller in the centre of the water.

A27.1 *nobregon deffufar buun.*

Even gold is in Deffufa.

M9.3 *kamgi jaanin meenin goon, irrig aa jaansu.*

Before he buys the camel, he bought the bridle.

Further occurrences are:

- A20.4 A28.14
- M9.11 M9.12 M9.24 (all related to M9.3)

For **anthropomorphism** where deity is attributed with a part of the human anatomy I refer to semantic domain 31 ‘God’.

5.11. Conclusion

Here, poetry, lyrics and stories related to the perceived meanings of proverbs could be added. However, I limit such insights to a very few instances, as the stories from HASAN M. EL-SHAMY presented in section 5.4.1.

Nubian proverbs reflect the Nubian environment and the Nubians’ high self-esteem: They “believed their villages ... to have the highest standards of peacefulness, cleanliness, honesty, and personal security in Egypt.”²⁰¹⁵ Proverbs are one means to reach and keep these ideals. The following generation should know what behaviour is acceptable and what needs to be avoided, especially in their behaviour toward family and fellow villagers, in order to maintain a societal equilibrium and become a respected member of the community.

Elders must have done a brilliant job as the crime rate in the Nubian homelands remains low. However, change may be ahead. One Dongolawi solicitor

²⁰¹⁵ FERNEA and KENNEDY 2010: 250. While they write about pre-*hijra* Egyptian Nubia, their observation is valid for the present resettlement villages and the Dongola Reach, too.

told me that between 1989 and 2002 in the whole region of Argo there had been two murders, hardly any thefts, and a few cases of divorce. Eight years later he observed an increase in the number of divorce cases.²⁰¹⁶

While proverbs are applied to new situations, altogether the use of proverbs is decreasing, as discussed in subchapter 3.5. Members of the Nubian community acknowledge that their conversations have become less straight forward during the last forty or so years.²⁰¹⁷ That may partly be related to the demise of proverbs, because proverbs offer a forceful and thereby possibly more direct way of communication.

This decrease may also be related to language shift that is more advanced in Mattokki than in Andaandi proverbs: For example, in the first semantic domain ('River') Andaandi proverbs do not have a single loanword from Arabic, in Mattokki there are five: *xoor* (M1.2; ECA *khoor* – 'land depression'), *ziyaada* (M1.5; ECA *ziyaada* – 'rise, increment'), *sukkar* (M1.11; ECA *sukkar* – 'sugar'), *rushee* (M1.12; ECA *rash* – 'to sprinkle, strew, spray'), and *habar* (M1.21; ECA *khabar* – 'news').²⁰¹⁸

Parallel to the demise of proverbs, Nubians lament an increase in telling lies. This could be another consequence, as the veiled language of proverbs is not replaced by a similar forceful means of communication. The West suffers likewise: Could the increase in fake news in the West also be related to the demise of popular proverbs and to the resulting behavioural changes?

Finally, applying Nubian proverbs and wise sayings to contemporary society as begun in subchapter 5.8, employing them in literacy classes as "it is much easier to draw an object or animal than a person doing whatever the proverb is really about"²⁰¹⁹ and making them known outside of Nubia would help rural and urban societies in the Global South and in the West to achieve a

²⁰¹⁶ One solicitor 2002+2010, p.c. Confirmed by men from Agade 2010, p.c.

²⁰¹⁷ E.g. the Dongolawi poet Ḥasan Rizig 2010, p.c.

²⁰¹⁸ ECA terms and English translations taken from EL-SAID BADAWI and HINDS 1986.

²⁰¹⁹ HANSFORD 2003: 63.

more balanced state which nowadays is lacking in the West and in societies influenced by Western materialism and individualism.²⁰²⁰

²⁰²⁰ Cf. ‘Generation Burnout’ in the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: www.faz.net/aktuell/karriere-hochschule/burnout-im-studium-immer-mehr-studierende-sind-emotional-erschoeft-19160652.html [last accessed on 13 September 2023]

Glossary

The glossary is more about topics than about words. It is restricted to about 475 terms that are pivotal for this thesis. It is meant to encourage further studies of Nubian language and sociocultural traits. When a section discusses one topic frequently, usually only the first occurrence is listed. It also includes a few famous Andaandi and Mattokki poets, artists, and one researcher.

A Nubian or Arabic translation is added especially if it will be helpful for further research.

'A

'Abd al Latif Sīd Aḥmad (Andaandi poet) · 561, 564

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alliteration · 743

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angel of the Nile - *essin malayka* · 177, 183, 661

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Arabic proverbs, general · 124, 156

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Arabic · 715

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'large heart') · 310, 324, 347, 445, 493, 553, 705, **706**, 707, 709

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In the following, [NB] at the end denotes (one of) the author(s) as a Nubian, thereby making Nubian voices visible, and [SD] the author as a non-Nubian Sudanese. As many Northern Sudanese and Nubian sociocultural traits are related, Nubian voices where not or insufficiently available are represented by voices from a similar environment.

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