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Review

GERMA AWGEČČÄW DÄMMÄQÄ, ቋንቋና ነገድ በኢትዮጵያ, I: የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ማንነትና ቅድመታሪክ (ከቋንቋ አንጻር)

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Editorial Team

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tatanina, a creole leader of slave revolts, Pier M. Larson works on Madagascar and Mauritius to re-evaluate *créolité* and to propose a new model based on the agency of subaltern people to overcome the linguistic and cultural discontinuity prevalent in colonial society. In the Mascarene Islands, Audrey Carotenuto studies a form of slave-led violence called ‘resistance-aggression’ on the basis of three cases found in legal archives, and articulates both quantitative and qualitative data to renovate our knowledge of slave resistance in the island of Réunion.

This volume is completed by fifteen maps that provide immense support to the reader, as well as twelve tables and graphics used to illustrate specific points. It can now be safely assumed that scholarship on the history of slavery and slave trade in a large expanse of East Africa and the south-west Indian Ocean has reached maturity, and we can only encourage colleagues and students to upgrade their skills in French to gain direct access to such a reference volume.

Giulia Bonacci, Institut de recherche pour le développement

GƏRMA AWGƏČČAW DÄMMÄQÄ, **ቋንቋና ነገድ በኢትዮጵያ** (*Q^wanq^wanna nägäd bä^wItyopya*, ‘Language and identity in Ethiopia’), I: **የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ማንነትና ቅድመታሪክ (ከቋንቋ አንጻር)** (*Yä^wItyopya həzb manənnätənnā qədmätarik (käq^wanq^wa anšar)*, ‘The identity and the prehistory of the Ethiopian people (from the perspective of the language)’ (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2018). 248 pp. Price: \$29.95. ISBN: 978-1-56902-598-7 (HB), 978-1-56902-599-4 (pb).

The book **ቋንቋና ነገድ በኢትዮጵያ** (*Q^wanq^wanna nägäd bä^wItyopya*, ‘Language and identity in Ethiopia’), I: **የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ማንነትና ቅድመታሪክ (ከቋንቋ አንጻር)** (*Yä^wItyopya həzb manənnätənnā qədmätarik (käq^wanq^wa anšar)*, ‘The identity and the prehistory of the Ethiopian people (from the perspective of the language)’), in Amharic, is the first volume in the planned four-volume series dedicated to the languages and ethnic groups of Ethiopia (the second volume was also published in 2018 as Gərma Awgəččaw Dämmäqä, **ቋንቋ እና ነገድ በኢትዮጵያ** (*Q^wanq^wa ənnā nägäd bä^wItyopya*, ‘Language and identity in Ethiopia’), II (Princeton, NJ–Lawrenceville, GA: Institute of Semitic Studies, 2018)).

The author of this series is the renowned linguist Gərma Awgəččaw Dämmäqä (Girma A. Demeke), whose list of publications includes such solid monographies as *The Origin of Amharic* (2009) and *Grammatical Changes in Semitic: A Diachronic Grammar of Amharic* (2014).

The book is addressed to a general reader interested in the complicated history and intrinsic interrelations of the more than ninety ethnic groups and their languages in Ethiopia. Its main aim is to present a coherent and updated survey of Ethiopian languages paying special attention to the significance of linguistic facts for the reconstruction of the history of the respective ethnic groups. The reader is not expected to have any acquaintance with linguistic terminology and methodology. On the contrary, the author patiently and clearly explains the basic concepts of comparative linguistics. The book provides a useful list of the Amharic equivalents for the most important linguistic terms used in English writings on comparative and general linguistics.

The author also takes great pains to make it clear that the language and the people are two distinct—albeit closely related—objects of study and strives to eradicate the general misunderstandings arising from the homophony of ethnonyms and the corresponding language names.

The book consists of six chapters and three appendices. The first chapter introduces basic facts on the languages of Ethiopia, the interrelation between linguistics and history, the concepts of language change, language relationships, lexicostatistics, genealogical classification, and language contact. Furthermore, it outlines the general plan for the whole four-volume series: the first volume contains a broad survey of the languages and peoples of Ethiopia; the second volume deals with Omotic and Nilo-Saharan languages of Ethiopia, as well as three languages of no established genealogical affiliation (Šabo, °Ongota, and the Ethiopian Sign Language); the third volume considers the languages of Cushitic family and the concept of Cush as a historical toponym and ethnonym; finally, the fourth volume presents information on the Semitic languages of Ethiopia. The first chapter also outlines the principles of orthography, punctuation, the use of references and of special terms. One of the very sound principles followed in this book is the avoidance of Latin script in the main text: all the English-spelt words and quotations in English, as well as references to European literature, are given in footnotes. The only exception is the tables, where English-based spellings of language names are given side by side with the spellings in Ethiopian script; likewise, the linguistic data proper—phonological inventories and morphemes—are presented in the traditional Latin-based transcription. All in all, the first chapter is the introduction to the whole four-volume series rather than to the first volume only.

The second chapter is a brief introduction to the volume first proper. It outlines the contents of the Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

The third chapter introduces the Afroasiatic language phylum and gives the basic facts on their distribution and internal genealogical classification.

It contains special subsections dealing with each language family within Afroasiatic: Egyptian, Chadic, Berber, Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic. The first three families are treated in detail (in fact, the author presents numerous tables which list all Chadic and Berber languages, drawn from the online version of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, retrieved in 2017). However, the Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic languages are only briefly touched upon here, as special volumes will be dedicated to these language families. Furthermore, the third chapter presents data on Proto-Afroasiatic phonology, morphology, word order, and vocabulary. Naturally, this chapter also discusses the results of glottochronological research on Afroasiatic and the question of the Proto-Afroasiatic homeland. The author advocates the hypothesis of Ethiopia as the original area of Proto-Afroasiatic (and in fact goes so far as to place the map which illustrates this claim on the front cover of the book). At the same time, he states explicitly that this view is not shared by all scholars and even quotes some arguments in favour of Asia as the homeland of Proto-Afroasiatic. It should be stressed that the African origin of Proto-Afroasiatic—which indeed finds many supporters—does not necessarily imply the Ethiopian origin of Proto-Afroasiatic, and that adherents of the latter hypothesis are not numerous. However, it is only natural that in a book addressed to Ethiopian readers the ‘pro-Ethiopian’ topics are especially prominent. At any rate, careful readers will be able to go through the detailed discussion and discover that the view presented on the front cover is far from being commonly accepted.

Chapter 4 is entitled ‘The prehistory and ethnicity of the Ethiopian peoples’. It is, according to the author’s Introduction, a general outline of the problems to be considered in detail in the corresponding volumes. This chapter mainly contains criticism of the traditional reconstruction of the formation of Ethiopian society as a chain of migrations. According to the traditional view, both Cushitic-speaking peoples and Semitic-speaking peoples are strangers to the region: initially Cushitic speakers arrived and settled in areas previously occupied by Nilo-Saharan speakers, and later the Cushitic population was largely assimilated (at least as far as the language is concerned) by Semitic-speaking newcomers from the Arabian Peninsula. This picture is unacceptable for the author, who claims that there is no evidence whatsoever that Semitic languages in Ethiopia are the result of a migration from South Arabia. This view is merely a logical development of the hypothesis discussed in the previous chapter: of course, if Ethiopia is regarded as the homeland of Proto-Afroasiatic, it is not difficult to consider it to be the homeland of the Semitic as well.

Chapter 5 considers the ethnonym Ḥabāša and related terms in detail, from the earliest records to modern usage, both in Ethiopian and external

sources. Here, once again, the main aim of the author is to show that the presence of South Arabian epigraphic evidence for this term does not imply the origin of the Ḥabāša (or Ḥbs²t) people to be South Arabian. The intricate and fascinating story of this term, vital for Ethiopian self-identity, will undoubtedly hold the attention of many of this book's readers.

Chapter 6 sums up the main theses presented in the book.

The volume also contains three appendices: (1) a list of Afroasiatic languages (which follows the online version of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, retrieved in 2017); (2) a list of the languages of Ethiopia, including the extinct languages; (3) an Amharic–English glossary of basic linguistic terms. Aside from which, the book contains an extensive bibliography, and a subject index.

The appearance of a popular science book on the languages of Ethiopia in Amharic, written by a professional linguist well acquainted with both the topic he is writing on and the general myths and misjudgements concerning the history of Ethiopian population, widespread even among an educated readership, can only be welcome. It is hoped that for many people this book will be a guide to the fascinating field of comparative linguistics and reveal many secrets of their own language and the languages of their compatriots, as well as of their shared history, the history of Ethiopia.

Maria Bulakh, HSE University

ISSAYAS TESFAMARIAM, ትግርኛ ንዛረብ: *Let's Speak Tigrinya, Elementary Level, A First-Year Textbook, A Multidimensional Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Tigrinya As a Foreign Language*, NALRC "Let's Speak" African Language Series (Bloomington, IN: National African Language Resource Center Press, 2018). xxv, 299 pp. Price: \$35.00. ISBN: 978-1-59703-030-4.¹

Das Tigrinische, die quasi-Staatssprache in Erythräa und Regionalsprache im äthiopischen Təgray, mit ca. 9 Mill. Sprechern verdient mehr Aufmerksamkeit, als dieser drittgrößten modernen semitischen Sprache nach dem Arabischen und Amharischen im Augenblick zukommt. Deshalb freut man sich über die vorliegende Einführung in diese Sprache, die in einer universitären Reihe "Let's Speak" African Language Series von dem National Afri-

¹ Auf der Rückseite des Titelblattes wird die Umschrift *Tegrena nezareb* geboten; richtig *Təgrəñña nəzzaräb*.