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Dissertation abstract

Aux confins le feu, au centre le Paradis. Qoma Fasilädäs, un monastère royal dans l'Ethiopie du 17ème siècle

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Dissertation abstracts

Qoma Fasilädäs monastery is located in the south of the Bägémder region, overlooking the Abbay gorge, in front of Mota. This royal monastery and its wide parish were founded by Queen Wäld Säʾala (ca. 1580–1661). Its foundation took place during a crucial period : the end of the reign of the Catholic king Susneyos (1607–32), husband of Wäld Säʾala, and the first part of the reign of their son Fasilädäs (1632–67), restorer of the Alexandrine faith and founder of Gondär city. The queen chose to separate from her husband and his religious and political choices. The church was first dedicated to Saint Gälawdéwos, as Wäld Säʾala supported her second son Gälawdéwos against the first-born, Fasilädäs, after the death of Susneyos. Qoma did not receive any legal acknowledgement by the royal power until Fasilädäs got rid of his brother in 1648. Then, the monastery was renamed Qoma Fasilädäs.

Despite these difficulties, the queen took advantage of her royal standing to construct an impressive compound made of stones and mortars and richly endow the church with lands, precious liturgical objects and manuscripts. She succeeded in building a rich and independent territory. Its formal status is resumed by the following legal formula: "At the confines the fire, at the centre the Paradise", protecting against any interference.

The historical interest of this monographic study is displayed in three points.

First, Qoma was able to preserve its historical sources and memories. The Gondarine buildings and the mural paintings, dating from the foundation period, are extremely interesting. The monastic library contains more than 70 manuscripts and their study permits an understanding of the culture of this period and the strengthening of the orthodox faith. Moreover, it involves a corpus of oral tradition, which is the most original historical source. Because of its marginalized status, the memory of the community has been preserved by orality. This thesis reveals the construction of a specific identity by oral memory. More than 20 interviews were collected and translated.

The second part places the foundation of Qoma in a global perspective. The course of the foundation of Qoma sheds light on the mechanisms of transmission of power and the role of religious movements at this time. Qoma

was one of the first monasteries at the head of the *qebat*, or unctionist, monastic network.

Third, this written document, the ሥሪት (*sərrit*), and its oral complement have permitted for the first time an understanding of the relationship between land tenure and social hierarchy inside the parish.

This thesis is a persuasive synthesis of written material, both published and unpublished, of oral information, and of information derived from church paintings. It illuminates important questions in Ethiopian history, some specific to this period, others of more general import.

PETER UNSETH, *Bi-Consonantal Reduplication in Amharic and Ethio-Semitic*, Dissertation accepted at the University of Texas at Arlington on May 23, 2002 to obtain a Ph.D. degree in Linguistics.

This dissertation is a study of the consonant reduplication process in Amharic, a process that is herein named "Bi-Consonantal Reduplication" (BCR). In this reduplication process, the last two consonants of a root are repeated, a process that has never been studied in a systematic way in Amharic or any other Semitic language.

Previous authors have used a variety of labels for this process, too often writing their definitions in ways that include other types of reduplication or that exclude some genuine examples of this reduplication pattern. This dissertation provides a more precise definition for this process that includes all and only genuine examples, leading to the new label BCR. It is shown that some additional classes of forms are clearly derived by BCR, though it had previously been assumed that these were derived by a totally different process of reduplication.

It is shown that derived forms from certain types of roots can be inflected as verbs, but derived forms from other types of roots cannot. The latter can be used for verbal functions as the non-inflected lexical bases of compound verbs or as nouns and adjectives. Also, this study has led to the discovery and identification of certain classes of roots that cannot be reduplicated by BCR.

This dissertation also contains a survey of the semantic categories represented by words derived by BCR. It is shown that BCR is used with certain semantic categories frequently, including impairment of gait, and dressing up fancy.

The dissertation provides evidence that BCR was a part of Semitic at a very early stage. Evidence is presented of BCR in languages where it had been previously overlooked, and a hypothesis is given for why it has been lost in certain other languages.