

The Road to the Two Sudans

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Edited by

Souad T. Ali, Stephanie Beswick,
Richard Lobban and Jay Spaulding

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P U B L I S H I N G

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	vii
--------------------	-----

Part I: Perceptions

Chapter One.....	2
------------------	---

The Perception of the Outside and the Outsider in Dongolawi
and Kenzi Proverbs

Marcus Jaeger

Chapter Two	20
-------------------	----

Settlement and Displacement in the Sudan

Hana Al-Motasim

Chapter Three	61
---------------------	----

Two Hundred Years of Development:
High Modernism, Water and People in South Sudan

Kevin Boueri

Chapter Four	90
--------------------	----

Life is Prickly:

Belonging and the Common Place in Bor, Southern Sudan

Brendan Tuttle

Part II: Legacies

Chapter Five	108
--------------------	-----

The Role of Slavery in the Rise and Fall of the Shilluk Kingdom

Stephanie Beswick

Chapter Six	143
-------------------	-----

The Old Men who Know the Boundaries:

Local Agency in Old Sudanese Politics

Jay Spaulding

Chapter Seven.....	160
Spinners, Weavers, Merchants and Wearers: The Twentieth Century Decline of the Sudanese Textile Industry Steven Serels	
Chapter Eight.....	177
Sudan and the British Empire in the Era of Colonial Dismantlement (1946-1956): History Teaching in Comparative Perspective Iris Seri-Hersch	
Part III: Strategies	
Chapter Nine.....	222
Agricultural Development Strategies for South Sudan Sam L. Laki	
Chapter Ten	234
The Role of Oil in the Sudanese Civil War Sam L. Laki	
Chapter Eleven	251
Prospects for Political and Economic Stability in the Republic of South Sudan: Redefining the Role of Sudanese in the Diaspora Eliza Mary Johannes and Mumo Nzau	
Bibliography	269
Index	301

INTRODUCTION

This volume of exceptionally fine scholarly papers originated during the years that spanned the division of the former Sudan into two new countries. It was inspired by the gathering of the Sudan Studies Association at Arizona State University in 2012, where most of the contributions offered here were first aired. The book has been produced by individuals who care deeply about all the people involved in this highly significant parting of the ways. One of the present editors, Jay Spaulding, has long told his college history classes that the nineteenth century bound together northern and southern Sudanese with ties so intimate as to be virtually indissoluble, but so painful as to be all but unbearable. Everyone involved in the production of this book wishes the very best to everyone as a new age of separate national destinies begins. May the future bring peace and prosperity to all.

The studies offered here have in common a commitment to high intellectual discourse, and they offer the best and most recent scholarship about the Sudan available. However, they inevitably reflect the diverse academic disciplines and intellectual traditions through which they were created. The editors are particularly proud to include contributions from newly-referenced fields not ordinarily associated with Sudan Studies, and the inclusion and absorption of a much broader field of intellectual reference than has been customary, as evidenced by our collective bibliography.

The papers fall naturally into three conceptual units, each affording a set of original approaches toward and into the wider Sudanese situation. Each of these approaches deserves extended and profound reflection; it is our intention here merely to begin discussions in many fields, not to close debate in any. One set of studies implicitly asks us to examine critically the perceptual lenses through which individuals – including both Sudanese folk north and south and outsiders – see and analyze the respective realities generated by alternative viewpoints. A second asks whether, how, and in what ways, the past experience of Sudanese people may impinge upon the circumstances of the present. A third, looking toward the future, takes stock of what exists and begins the task of organizing and coordinating the future – particularly in the new land of South Sudan.

Part I: Perceptions

Marcus Jaeger invites us to enter a northern Sudanese community through the discipline of folklore, an approach that distills the collective knowledge and wisdom of a community through the texts, often oral, the group deems worthy of preservation and consideration – in this case proverbs. The study illustrates how each Sudanese community – in this case, the speakers of Kenzi-Dongolawi – constructs a unique philosophical and moral reality. In this instance, the issue examined is communal cultural boundary maintenance, a demarcation drawn along the fault line of the largely pejorative qualities ascribed to those defined as “other”.

Hana al-Motasim adopts a photographer’s vision to explore the world of internally displaced Sudanese people. She finds that some of the displaced may well develop an inverted sense of which aspects of material culture are lasting and possessed of permanent value. A dwelling, for example, may rank as ephemeral; in its refugee settlement it stands vulnerable to the bulldozers of every whim of change in government policy toward the displaced. Small portable cherished objects of largely symbolic value culturally outrank larger, practically utilitarian and ostensibly more expensive ones. The battered but cherished suitcase in which one packs the essentials for flight when again dispossessed earns an almost iconic place of honor.

Kevin Boueri wields concepts derived from James C. Scott and James Ferguson to critique the rhetoric of “development”. His study focuses upon South Sudan examples, but the critique itself has much wider relevance and could be applied to many situations elsewhere. Too often the concept of “development” focuses entirely upon the real or alleged benefits of various projected instruments of progress, while blandly ignoring the concomitant eradication of existing and longstanding social, cultural and economic realities. The anticipated impact of the proposed Jonglei Canal provides an excellent example. An artificial, specialized idiom of discussion is constructed to lock in the desired modalities and goals of “development”, whereas no terms of reference are allowed to intrude that might expose the human costs to be imposed upon the recipients.

Brendan Tuttle endeavors to enter and share the world of internally displaced Sudanese people. The examples he cites are drawn from the experiences of people in Bor, South Sudan, but the problematic of home-seeking is relevant to many other situations also. People thrown adrift by history may well find that there is no path of return to the ancestral home, while one may well become an undesired alien in newly-imposed

situations where others have better claims to indigenous priority. Transitions in political economy elevate some and neglect others. Lacking is a meaningful sense of common identity and shared rights and privileges. Prolonged warfare is more profoundly destructive than is commonly understood.

Part II: Legacies

Stephanie Beswick explores the historical interaction between the northern Sudanese tradition of state society and the adjoining community of Nilotic-speakers, especially the Shilluk. Her study first treats the last precolonial centuries, when the Shilluk built a centralized kingdom capable of conducting trade and predatory regional politics on comparable terms to the adjacent kingdom of Sinnar. Her study then traces the efforts of nineteenth-century Shilluk people to defend the kingdom against the inroads of the Turko-Egyptians. Her study rests upon an extensive library of orally-derived data granted by her Shilluk informants, as well as the diverse written sources.

Jay Spaulding examines the role of community elders in the course of two typical northern Sudanese land disputes, one from the late eighteenth century and the other the early twentieth, evidenced by very different primary sources. Political tensions at the summit of state and the regional levels of government sometimes allowed a modest sphere of leeway for the exercise of power – or at least effective resistance – at the local level. The looming prospect of the possible intrusion of new and more binding cultural elements, notably written documentation and *shari`a* law, also influenced the outcomes.

Steven Serels analyzes the systematic destruction of the ancient northern Sudanese cotton textile industry following the First World War. Twentieth-century preferences for industrial ginning and machine weaving abroad challenged the hitherto-vital roles of women as spinners (ginned lint could not be spun by conventional methods) and of male weavers of the indigenous craft-based tradition, which had hitherto kept pace with and adapted to world market conditions up to the 1920s. Policies that introduced ever-larger irrigated cotton-growing schemes also dramatically impoverished key industry participants through the spread of indebtedness. As the Sudanese consumer market stumbled into the depression, what remained of the indigenous industry collapsed.

Iris Seri-Hersch offers a widely-focused study of colonial history instruction that locates the Sudanese experience within the broader British colonial context. The focus lies upon the years following World War Two,

as the “Winds of Change” began to rustle Sudanese pedagogical trees. Who should study history? Why? Whose history? With what conceptual tools, and in which intellectual, political and cultural contexts? Her richly-documented study reveals that few simple answers are clear; the guidance past experience offers to the future is therefore, in this instance, ambiguous. Beneath the discussion of instruction, she also implicitly interrogates numerous aspects of the “received tradition” of Sudanese history in the light of recent theoretical insights.

Part III: Strategies

Sam L. Laki presents a sound and comprehensive survey of the agricultural resources of the new country of South Sudan. He offers an extended series of soundly-reasoned suggestions concerning how each of these might be most wisely exploited. He analyzes carefully the changes and improvements in infrastructure, human resources and financial institutions that will be necessary at the national level in order to implement the policies he advocates. However, he also argues that grass-roots initiatives and democratically-grounded bottom-up projects are the most likely to produce lasting and positive results.

In a darker idiom, Dr. Laki traces the story of Sudanese oil exploration during the war years. The discovery of this valuable new resource significantly influenced the course of the struggle between north and south, and enmeshed the foreign relations of both new lands in controversial webs of external obligation. For both lands, the shift to an extractive-based economy as the dominant development model raised profound challenges to other conceivable futures that might have been created through an appeal to other resources and opportunities – eloquently exemplified by the author’s own first contribution.

Eliza Mary Johannes and Mumo Nzau raise the question of how exiled refugees from war and oppression now living abroad might best interact with their homeland when peace returns. The authors’ primary concern is with refugees from South Sudan, but many of the issues they raise would also pertain to exiles from the north. Implicit in their approach is a realization that the return of exiles, or even their significant involvement in a now-distant homeland, is sometimes perceived to be controversial. They argue that the exiles have experience and expertise to offer, certainly in technical capacities and perhaps also as a politically moderating influence. They support their views through comparative reference to the experience of other diaspora communities.

PART I

PERCEPTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERCEPTION OF THE OUTSIDE AND THE OUTSIDER IN DONGOLAWI AND KENZI PROVERBS

MARCUS JAEGER

Dongolawi and Kenzi in their homelands lived most of their recent history quite separated from other people. Only with the resettling of the Kenzi to the Kom Ombo area in 1964 and the opening of a tarmac road between Khartoum and Dongola in 2009 did contacts with non-Nubians drastically increase. As it takes time for new proverbs to develop there is not much direct proverbial advice about dealing with non-Nubians. However some proverbs speak indirectly about that topic. This paper will look into Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs dealing with the outside and the outsider giving some insight into the shaping of identity among the Dongolawi and Kenzi Nubians. It will also deal with the present validity of the metonymy and metaphors employed in these proverbs.

1. Introduction

1.1. Historical Settings and Communication Links

For most of their recent history the Dongolawi and the Kenzi Nubians living in their homelands along the Nile between Ed-Debba in the south and Aswan in the north were separated from other peoples due to the desert environment.(1) Only the river provided a communication link. In the Dongolawi area until the end of the nineteenth century even the river Nile did not provide a suitable communication link with other parts of the Sudan due to its S-bend in the Karima and Abu Hamed region which was difficult to navigate as neither the river flow nor the wind supported up-river travel. Later on until the 1980s the Dongolawi area had a regular boat service to and from Karima connecting there with the Sudanese railways

onwards to Khartoum which overcame the S-bend. The journey took about 6 days. During the second half of the twentieth century there were lorry-turned buses running from Dongola through the desert to Khartoum which took three days, then two, and finally one. Due to the rough journey rest afterwards was necessary. Elizabeth and Robert Fernea describe the isolation of Egyptian Nubian villages fittingly:

“[T]he Nubian villages ... were isolated far beyond the degree characteristic of many peasant communities, where trips to the city market regularly break the seasonal routine. The desolate environment behind the villages tied the people more closely to the edge of the Nile than most peasants are tied to their communities. ...; boat travel was slow where it existed at all, and moving along the Nile by donkey from one village to the next took time and effort”.(2)

Until the resettlement in 1963 the Kenzi Nubian villages and Aswan were connected by a weekly boat service called the “Posta”. If travel even within the Dongolawi and Kenzi area was difficult, obviously there was even less contact with outsiders – lovingly called “gurbatti” by the Kenuzi.(3) Nubia was nearly “out of the world”. Exceptions to this isolation were Arab merchants and Arab nomads, as well as the enclave of Fadidja and Mahas Nubians living between the Dongolawi and the Kenzi Nubians. Only since the resettling of the Kenzi to the Kom Ombo area north of Aswan in 1964 and the opening of a tarmac road between Dongola and Khartoum in 2009 have contacts to non-Nubians increased drastically. Nubia is now “in the World”. Therefore one is not surprised that there is not that much direct proverbial advice about dealing with non-Nubians outsiders or the outside in general. New proverbs guiding the increased relationship towards outsiders will need time to develop.

1.2. Proverbs among the Dongolawi and Kenuzi

While both Dongolawi and Kenzi have proverbs, it is interesting that no Dongolawi or Kenzi jokes and no Dongolawi or Kenzi curse words have been discovered. Among the Dongolawi when one wants to tell a joke or utter a curse one uses Arabic.(4) The Dongolawi call their proverbs *meselad*, the Kenuzi *masal*. Both are derived from Arabic “mesel”. There does not seem to exist any specific Dongolawi or Kenzi word for “wise sayings”. Kenzi Nubians sometimes opened the saying of a proverb with the phrase:

masal weeki weesa
They said a proverb

One Dongolawi remembers his grandmother concluding a proverb by the phrase:

an duulinci weesan tannan

That is what our elders said

That is close to words used for proverbs in other languages where a proverb is referred to as a saying of the elders, or of the grandfathers. The Dongolawi even have a proverb about elders:

duulgi koomenil, duulgi jaanin.

He who does not have an elder person, he buys an elder person

The wisdom of old people is important for any community,
more important than money(5)

In this sense collectors of proverbs need to look for the older folk first. However collecting proverbs and listening to them is very much enjoyed by people of all ages as it adds some prestige to their language, both in the eyes of its speakers but also the wider community.(6)

Collecting and documenting Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs becomes more

urgent with the Nile-Nubian languages becoming endangered, as Peter Unseth acknowledges even for languages where there is less language shift:

“Though a community may not be in immediate danger of losing their 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”.(7)

Proverbs are not natural facts, they are a construct, an ideal, which a group of people would like to achieve or with which they would like to be identified. How should proverbs be interpreted? The Dongolawi recommend:

tokkon tolle mukkimen!

Do not draw and drive (the boat)!/Do not sail far!(8)

You try to read what is behind the lines/words, even if the
words are clear in meaning.

This proverb is an encouragement to accept words at their face value and not to start interpreting. It is also said to somebody who argues too much. This is opposite to the Western idea of deconstructing texts. Therefore any critical analysis of the proverbs of a group of people can

also be regarded by the speech community as a criticism of their social values. The Sudanese researcher Salwa Ahmed experienced it “when I was discussing the social attitudes towards women expressed in Sudanese proverbs”.(9) The needs and wishes of individuals and of their community of people (which in the present case are minority groups) have to be balanced against the requirements of the research community. While Salwa as a Sudanese Arab was an insider and therefore had exceptional access to Sudanese Arab proverbs, in other cases insiders may want to restrict proverbial knowledge in order to create and project a certain image or identity of their own group towards the outsider. As I am an outsider to the Nubian community I need to keep in mind that I may have been presented with only a part of the whole picture. I am the outsider some Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs speak about! On the other hand as modern-day Dongolawi and Kenuzi seem to define their identity less by their own proverbs than formerly (regarding some of their proverbs even as ancient history) I as an outsider may have had better access to their proverbs than if I had collected them some decades earlier. Still, misrepresentation or false categorization is possible. In the following we will look at some specific insiders to the Nubian culture in more detail and discover what collecting proverbs meant to them.

1.3. Hamid Xabir and his Collection of Dongolawi Proverbs

Many Dongolawi wise sayings and proverbs discussed in this paper were collected by the farmer Hamid Xabir AlShaich from Xannaag, a village south of modern-day Dongola close to the river Nile in Northern Sudan. He is a most astonishing person. During February 2005 for the first time Hamid Xabir’s proverbs were presented to a wider audience: At a celebration of Dongolawi culture in Urbi (south of Xannaag) which was attended by Hamid Xabir the organizers wrote some of his proverbs on wall paper and posted them at a public place. The Ministry of Culture in Dongola had been invited for this event but did not send any representative. In 2007 Hamid Xabir’s Nubian sayings and proverbs were printed by Nader in Arabic with financial aid from the Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage.(10) Due to its publication in Arabic one can assume that the Dongolawi proverbs were mainly written for a Dongolawi audience who still speak the language yet are in the process of forgetting their proverbs, plus other Dongolawi who already have forgotten the language entirely, speaking only Arabic, helping them to value their heritage. Most probably Hamid Xabir was also aware that other Sudanese will read his publication. So the perceived audience

included both insiders and outsiders. In the meantime Hamid Xabir has been shown some acknowledgement of his hard work. Since his publication he has been given a post and an office at the Ministry for Culture in Dongola – alas, a very minor one.

1.4. Egyptian Nubian Students and their Collection of Kenzi Proverbs

In general it has been more difficult to collect Kenzi proverbs. In the opinion of one Kenzi the Kenuzi forgot their proverbs after leaving their homeland and resettling around Kom Ombo.⁽¹¹⁾ In 1996 twenty Egyptian Nubian students of the Faculty of Social Work in Aswan were recruited to complete a brief Nubian Ethnological Survey largely restricted to New Nubia. Over a period of several months they documented Egyptian Nubian culture and heritage, including proverbs, but also tales, lullabies, marriage customs, “mulid” and mourning songs. Models of Nubian clothes, jewelry and houses were created. Unfortunately their work stayed incomplete and unpublished. It can be assumed that the collection of Kenzi proverbs in their original form were unedited and unpublished, which makes them especially valuable. As the students did not have a Western audience in mind (they had their supervisor at the university in mind) one can further assume that there was no deliberately distorted selection of proverbs by the two female students who collected them.

1.5. My Collection of Proverbs

Currently my corpus consists of more than 225 Dongolawi wise sayings and proverbs including all that Hamid Xabir collected. There are nearly 160 Kenzi wise sayings and proverbs including all the proverbs the two Egyptian Kenzi students collected. In order to classify the Nubian proverbs into topics, thirty-one semantic domains closely related to the Nubian culture have been selected. Each proverb number starts with the number of the domain and the person who gave me the proverb. It is followed by the proverb in Latin characters, and then the literal translation and the meaning of the proverb. There is one noteworthy case of a semantic domain underrepresented among these proverbs – only one Kenzi proverb deals directly with women. Therefore one has to take into account that the choice of proverbs may have been influenced by the people who told the proverbs. The present study draws on this corpus.

2. Dongolawi and Kenzi Proverbs

Most Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs describe Nubian life as it has been until a short while ago. Even if men were working outside Nubia, during childhood they were connected to the specific Nubian culture, and during retirement they would reconnect with it again. They would understand these proverbs. During the last fifty years the Kenuzi had to undergo even more changes than the Dongolawi. In 1964 the Kenuzi went through the process of resettlement (in Arabic they call it “hijra”, as Muslims call Muhammad’s history-changing move from Mekka to Medina) losing most of their home land and quite a lot of their culture. However language and culture shift is nowadays happening among the Dongolawi too. Changes include living away from the river for one’s entire life span, the replacement of the ox-driven waterwheel with the diesel pump and the loss of date palms; these changes may have made many of the following proverbs less than fully comprehensible to Nubians living outside of Nubia and maybe even to some inside Nubia, with consequent loss of traditional wisdom.

2.1. River, Water: Travelling to and from Nubia

Hamid Xabir begins his own collection with five proverbs dealing with the river (*uru*) which in Nubian terms means the river Nile. The Kenuzi call it *essi duul* ‘big water’. Nile-Nubians prefer living close to the river Nile. It is the source of all life. In former times when there were no roads most outsiders arrived by boat. However that happened relatively seldom. People knew each other. The rural Nubian society was closely knit with specific norms and beliefs (often expressed in proverbs) giving everybody a place of belonging and a sense of security which is frequently missing today. Proverbs dealing with travel by boat are not listed here as they deal with travel within the area, not travel to and from the outside or travel by outsiders. The direction of travel is both ways. In order to find work many Nubians (especially the Kenuzi) have been obliged in the past, and are still obliged today, to move to the big cities of Egypt and the Sudan. Nowadays many even go to the Gulf or Europe. In the old days they left by boat (like the “Posta”) leaving their wives and young children behind. While the wives waited for the return of their husbands some of the emigrants enjoyed their new situation so much that they never returned and settled in the city for good. Women especially were afraid that their relatives would not return when working outside of Nubia. Andreas and Waltraud Kronenberg observed:

“If a man migrates, and after a number of years he does not send money to his family nor visit his village nor care for his relatives, a sheikh is consulted for an amulet in order to make him return”.(12)

When a Nubian left his native village for a longer period in order to find work somewhere else, he was likely to be influenced by other norms and beliefs, which meant his behavior might well be strange when he returned from the city to his native village. An outsider is very similar. Nowadays she or he arrives by car or public transport at one of the Nile Nubian villages. It is nearly impossible to enter a Kenzi or Dongolawi village on public transport without other travelers having asked in advance where one wants to go. If there is somebody on the bus living in the same village, the outsider is accompanied as far as his or her final destination. Among the Kenuzi even the bus ticket is paid most of the time. This concerned generosity has a two-fold purpose; the outsider is well looked after and the village people get some information about the newcomer. The outsider coming to a Nubian village may bring other norms and beliefs. How should the people living in a village react in order to keep their well-balanced style of life?

uruged taakon.

He came with the river.

He is unknown.

The proverb is said when a stranger comes to a Nubian village and causes problems.(13)

urur toon bel taakon.

He came out of the river and came.

The stranger causes fear.(14)

There is one Dongolawi proverb where one does not arrive by river, but rather where the newcomer, like the cinematic alien E.T., is coming from above:

semaged digrelgi, arid sokken.

He who fell from heaven, the earth carries [him].

Some say this is encouragement to be patient and endure troubles; compare the English idiom “Patience is a virtue”. Others interpret it to mean “He wants to achieve a high position without exerting any effort. He is lazy”.(15)

There are no similar Kenzi proverbs where the emphasis is on coming. Instead Kenzi proverbs deal with going away:

boccina essigi niisa.

They drank the water of the outside [foreign places].
They changed their manners.(16)

mandona essigi niidil, walla wide aa taamnu.

He who drank the water of there [foreign places],
he does not return and come.

A [Kenzi] Nubian who moved to another place is unlikely to return.(17)

(Egyptians in contrast see their situation differently. They say: “He who drinks from the water of the Nile will return”.) The same fear of an insider not returning to his home village is also expressed by a proverb from the domain of agriculture:

karkaram esheyr toon daboski, ay bi taari.

If the dung disappears from the village, I will come back.
karkaram is manure from donkey, camel, goat or sheep.

It was part of any Nubian village.
Therefore I will not (ever) come back.(18)

There have been no Dongolawi proverbs discovered thus far which talk about the fear of not returning. The fear of not returning is even stronger when a Nubian marries a non-Nubian. Proverbs dealing with marrying an outsider (whether from another village or from a different tribe) are dealt with later. In sum, while Dongolawi are afraid of an outsider coming to their village, Kenzi are more afraid of an insider leaving his home village, forgetting his roots and not returning any more.

2.2. Choice of Marriage Partner

We will not give a detailed insight into the topic of marriage among Nile-Nubians, but look only at the choice of a suitable partner as recommended by some proverbs:

inn ishari wandin, irindigi tagirru.

Your (pl.) leavened flour appears,
you (pl.) cover [the leavened flour] belonging to other people.
You (pl.) should marry one of your relatives.(19)

Depending on if this proverb is said to a group or to a single person the pronoun can change.

ogij tenn kubegi tagirin.

A man covers his jar.

Encouragement to marry from within the same or extended family or tribe.(20)

Sudanese colloquial Arabic has a similar proverb: “It is better that the person covers his/her own pot”. Salwa adds: “The word pot metaphorically refers to the blood relationship”.(21) Note that Modern Standard Arabic does not have a similar proverb.

hambu warrigi ollikirin.

The doum palm causes a shadow in the distance.

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 would rather spend his/her money on other than family members and relatives. (22)

His positive influence is felt far away.(23)

ElShafie ElGuzuli replaces the word *olli* with *nuur*, both meaning ‘shadow’. Tall date palms have a long shadow. The doum date palm (*hambu*) is one of the tallest yet it gives still some shade as the top is very bushy. However the little bit of shade that exists is far away from the root. So if somebody is sitting in the shade of a doum palm his location is far away from the root of the doum palm. In all Sudanese languages where the *hambu* date palm is known it is a symbol for a stranger. Also in Sudanese Arabic “shade” is used in connection with family loyalty.(24)

urtici adelli tenna agarro toon aa belmunu.

Do not take the good domestic animal from its place.

Do not marry somebody from somewhere else even if that person is good.(25)

A suitable marriage partner is somebody who is closely related, thereby strengthening family relationships and keeping each Nubian kin group relatively closed. That was especially important due to many Nubian men moving to the cities in order to earn money. The unmarried women left in the home villages would not have found a suitable marriage partner if the Nubian young men working in the cities would not have been reminded of their kinship obligations. In this regard proverbs played an important role in keeping the connection between the city and the village alive. In reality, however, “there is more intermarriage with non Nubians than Nubians would like to admit”.(26) Interestingly quite a lot of

Nile-Nubian language activists have married outside their own speech community and thereby will not pass on the language to their children.

Until a short while ago a girl marrying somebody from a far-away village or even a non-Nubian husband was a sure sign that there was some blame on the girl or that she was getting old and had to accept anybody who proposed to her. One Kenzi man married a wife from his own village because with a wife from another village one doesn't know whether she is from a good family ("with a root") or not.(27)

An Egyptian non-Nubian Ph.D. scholar working with numerous contacts on gender among Nile-Nubians explained that formerly Nubian men went to work in Egyptian towns without their wives. From there they transferred part of their income back to the villages. The wives depended on these money transfers. If a Nubian husband took an Egyptian woman as a second wife, or began a primary relationship with an Egyptian woman, the transfers were likely to stop, since the money would often be spent on the Egyptian woman. This created financial difficulties for the whole family. Hence Nubian boys were taught from an early age that Egyptian girls were bad. Nubian marriages have normally been stable, but Egyptian women frequently rejected their Nubian husband when he grew old. Then he would return to his home village and give a bad report about Egyptian women.(28)

Nowadays marrying an outsider can be observed among Dongolawi and Kenuzi, especially the ones living in the cities. Since the resettlement in 1963 Egyptian Nubian men marry more Egyptian non-Nubian women, especially in Cairo, as they are regarded as more beautiful.(29) Young Nubians tell me that they can marry a Nubian girl or anybody else. That is true with regard of Nubians marrying Arabs or Westerners. However I did not come across a marriage partner from far western Sudan (Darfur) or from Southern Sudan. Most probably the people of these regions are still regarded as folk "without a root".

2.3. Animals: Staying at Home

Nubians living in the villages keep animals, mainly goats and sheep. Fewer Nubians keep a cow. The one who owns a cow is regarded as fortunate. Home is not only the best place for animals; it is also the best place for humans. The Dongolawi way of expressing *Heimat* is:

tii tenn kude menillo neewemunu.

The cow does not breathe except in its shed.

It is not possible to have rest anywhere in the world
except in one's home country.(30)

Compare the English idiom, “There’s no place like home”. While for a Kenuzi the home village would have never been the best option finance-wise, Dongolawi have been encouraged to think about the financial benefits of staying at home:

ghaayibn tii gurki uskin.

The cow of the absent [person] gives birth to the bull [tii guu]
A farmer keeps a cow; however he sells a bull as a cow is worth
more than a bull.

He who is away from home for a long time has fewer children than others.

He who is away from home gets less than the person present

As other people will take his rights.(31)

The proverb uses the internal feature of paradox in order to make the listener think.

2.4. Characteristics of the Outsider

People from alien places have a different smell:

billeen iris weerma.

The odor of the onion is unique.(32)

The term *billee* has a negative connotation. It does not occur in Dongolawi proverbs. For example, the proverb might be applied to two bad people who are from different areas.

However, one can be tolerant about this matter:

zooligi tenna halu mugosir!

Leave the people in their state!

Do not attempt to change somebody else.(33)

This proverb is used in response to an occasion when somebody speaks negatively about another person. The most extreme version of looking at an outsider is by naming him instead of merely describing him in general. In this case the specific outsider is regarded as an illness. Here Dongolawi and Kenuzi have a very similar proverb:

arab jereb, kandi mered, gutraan iris.

An Arab [is like] skin decease, a cutting of the knife, an odor of tar.

Arabs are regarded as distasteful people.(34)

In many Dongolawi villages Nubians have been occasionally visited by the nomadic or semi-nomadic Kababish Arabs or even living side-by-

side with them if they have become settled. So these nomadic or semi-nomadic Arabs are the most likely group this proverb talks about. Still, Arabs are associated with higher status than are the Halab (gypsies) who live among the Dongolawi, too. The Dongolawi are not alone in distancing themselves from the outsider, putting up boundaries, and defining separate identities for the insider and the outsider. Each Sudanese group has some sayings about other Sudanese groups. One example, given by Ahmed S. al-Shahi, would be the different groups of people living in Nuri, a Shaiqiyya village close to Karima and Merowe; these include the Nuri people proper, *'abid* or former slaves, Halab, and Arabs. After examining the proverbs talking about the stranger, the one who is "not one of us", he comes to the conclusion that "[a]lthough the distinctions between the social groups give an impression of disunity ... their separation is counteracted by their functional interdependence. In the economic sphere each group is needed by the other groups".(35) Much the same goes for the Dongolawi Nubians who need the tinkerware of the Halab and also the products of the semi-nomadic Arabs.

It is noteworthy that thus far I have not been told more proverbs of that kind. Hamid Xabir in his collection does not list a single similar proverb stereotyping another group. These proverbs may not exist, which could be possible as there is no indigenous name for people of the Dongolawi group, or, as I consider more likely, Dongolawi and Kenuzi people do not want outsiders to hear about it, especially in a publication. In the single proverb a Dongolawi gave me he/she only allowed me to use it if his/her name was not mentioned. If one digs into the reason for these kinds of proverbs some historical animosities come to the surface. However one should be careful not to over generalize on the basis of just one such a proverb. Wolfgang Mieder writes: "Proverbs can be quite negative when they express ... slurs or stereotypes".(36)

Such kinds of proverbs can also serve as a means of social control, putting up boundaries to keep the group together.(37) Proverb KP30.4 has similar wording yet a different meaning. Most probably the meaning depends on the way the speaker and its audience perceive the Arabs. In my own experience many Dongolawi and Kenuzi have meaningful friendships with Arabs and even identify with them.

arabbi garabbi.

Arabs [are like] skin diseases.

The skin of Arabs is dirtier than the skin of Nubians.

Arabs from Saudi Arabia are regarded as distasteful people.

Ababda Arabs are regarded as distasteful people.(38)

The Kenzi interpreter of the first free translation is living in a village which has few relations to Saudi Arabia. For him Arab nomads are hard-working (e.g. with their camels) and travel a lot. Therefore they have less time and opportunity to change their clothes and their clothing gets easily dirty. In contrast, the Nubians' work is less hard and more concerned with date palm trees and agriculture. Also they travel less and in former times they wore blue *gallabiyyas*. So their clothing always looked cleaner than that of the Arabs. The Kenzi of the second free translation is living in a village where many Nubians travel to Saudi Arabia to find work. The village has some nice houses built with remittances from Saudi Arabia. For him this proverb is told when a Nubian returns from Saudi Arabia and is angry about the Saudi Arabs he met there.

The Kenzi of the third free translation used the proverb in relation to the Ababda Beduins living around them, not in connection with Egyptians. The Ababda deal with camels which have that kind of disease. Note that the Kenzi proverb uses Arabic loan words only.

The importance of staying with one's group, even if one does not always agree with its opinion is stated by ElShafie ElGuzuli:

turug teebinn agarked silli!

Winnow at the place where the wind stops!

You may disagree with the opinion of the group,

But you should change your opinion to match the group's opinion.(39)

2.5. Hospitality

Formerly visitors to a Nubian village did not announce their arrival beforehand as their means of communication was lacking. In a traditional Nubian home a guest (who was an outsider and maybe even a non-Nubian) was always expected and would be welcomed at any time. If finally a guest arrives he will certainly be invited for a meal. The offer to sit down on the mat is considered a signal that the meal will be served. I got a good introduction to Nubian hospitality when I visited a Dongolawi village for the first time. (40) A Dongolawi man whom I had not even met before paid for my bus ticket and invited me to his house for breakfast. Afterwards in the next village a group of young men invited me to lunch. During my first visit to a Kenzi village I had a similar experience.(41) When I arrived at Muhammad Mirghani's house in a taxi, he ran out of the house (my arrival was unannounced!) paid the driver (which of course spoiled the driver's business since he can charge foreigners more), took me into the guest-room, turned on the Sudanese (!) television, brought me some water to quench my thirst, plus pencil and paper so I could start

writing up language data at once. He asked me if I had already had lunch. An old Kenzi lady gave a fitting explanation of why hospitality is so important: Food is part of hospitality, because food is from God and what you have been given by God must be passed on.(42)

The Dongolawi Muhammad Hassan told how his father, after two or three days of not receiving any guests, asked God what he had done wrong. Surely God would have sent guests if he had done everything right. In order to treat a guest properly Nubians even overstep religious boundaries. While being in the courtyard of some relatives of a Dongolawi man who takes his religious duties seriously, I noticed that there was no man in the house, but only the mother with her two daughters. So I decided it would be best to leave the house. But the women declared that their male relative had authorized them to keep me with them until I could be brought to him. How should I reply? I wondered if they only said that in order to show hospitality. Later I asked the Dongolawi man about the incident with his female relatives. At other times he showed his openness in discussing even difficult topics with me because he knew that I wanted to study his culture. So I hoped to be presented with a straight-forward answer. He told me that a visit such as mine was forbidden in Islam. But because it had to do with his family, he as a male relative had been present indirectly, and so the visit would be culturally permissible.

While a guest has a special status there are still certain things he should refrain from, like shouting. The double task of a host was nicely explained by a Kordofan Nubian. The host's task is not just to make the guest feel comfortable, but also to protect the area surrounding one's home from any wrong or harmful behavior by the guest.(43) Unfortunately the increasing influence in Dongolawi villages of the Ansar al-Sunna, a Wahabi based, Saudi Arabian influenced Islamist group is changing the understanding of hospitality. My experience with the mother and her two daughters would probably not be repeated in a Dongolawi village nowadays. At some later time in another village my host was asked by other men why he was offering hospitality to a Christian. My host answered quoting a tradition of the *sunna*, according to which each person is permitted to have his or her own religion. Hospitality is not only changing due to religious influence but also because of the increasing ease of communication and travel. Formerly news from outside was brought by guests, but now by television. This means that a guest has less to offer. Formerly one stayed in one place and hardly ever left it. This meant that a guest could arrive unannounced and still expect to find those he wanted to visit. Now transport links are better and one must arrange a visit in advance in order to meet the person one wishes to see.(44)

ishkartin nibid dolli buun.

The mat of the guest is always deep (e.g. ready).

The guest is welcome at any time.(45)

ishkarti kori kool.

A guest with a whip

He gets involved in things that do not concern him.(46)

In spite of their hospitality among Kenzi speakers no wise saying or proverb which relates to the semantic domain of hospitality has been discovered. Also other proverbs do not imply the term “guest”. However there is one proverb whose meaning deals with hospitality:

adelna welli barraged aa hawwira.

The dogs of the good [person] bark outside.

A friendly home with hospitality awaits the traveler.(47)

Before the advent of electricity in the Nubian villages at night it was pitch black. If a person walking late at night from one place to another heard the dogs barking he could expect a house to be close by, where much needed hospitality would be offered.

2.6. Summary and Outlook

Like most groups of people Dongolawi and Kenzi Nubians are cautious about the outside world. Coming from strange places (in Dongola) or going to strange places (among the Kenuzi) cannot be avoided; however, it needs to be done carefully. Marrying an outsider is frowned upon, yet it happens. The place where the Nile-Nubian culture really opens up for the outside and the outsider is hospitality. In my own experience from traveling in the Sudan, Sudanese Nubians in general enjoy showing overwhelming hospitality to a European outsider. Difficulties can arise when one thinks of hospitality towards an outsider from Southern Sudan or the Nuba Mountains. Could some of the ongoing animosities between North and South be overcome by showing more intergroup hospitality? Reciprocity would be a problem as many Southern or Nuba Sudanese living close to Northern Sudanese are less wealthy. What about European or North American outsiders showing hospitality jointly towards Southern or Western Sudanese and Nubians? Maybe the idea will be picked up. I have not tried it yet, but I would love to sit at one table with people from both areas during a banquet.

Egyptian Nubians have had lots of contact with Europeans through tourism. Frequently Europeans tell of positive working relationships as co-

workers in tourism or research, and of hospitality being shown. Could the differences between non-Nubian Egyptians and Nubian Egyptians (which are much less than the comparable differences in the Sudan) be overcome by showing more inter-group hospitality, too? Most of the contact between Nubian Egyptians and non-Nubian Egyptians happens in the cities. However city homes lack the typical Nubian courtyard and therefore are usually not large enough to show the kind of hospitality expected, either by the host or by the guest. Looking toward the future, one may suggest that if Nubians adhere to their ancient wisdom yet also open up to the modern world, “Nubia in the world” will continue to make an important contribution to human culture – as indeed Nubian participants in world-wide organizations such as the United Nations already have shown.

Notes

1. “Dongolawi” is an outsider term. The people call their language “Andaandi”; however, they do not give a specific name to the group of people themselves. “Oshkir” is an outsider term given by Nobiin speakers. Therefore I will stick to the term “Dongolawi” which is used by the research community. “Kenuzi” for the group of people and “Kenzi” for the language are outsider terms too. The people call their language and their group of people “Mattokki”. In order to stay consistent with the term “Dongolawi” I will use the terms “Kenzi” and “Kenuzi”. In the notes to follow individual proverbs are cited according to a system of reference described in section 1.5 of my text.
2. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Robert A Fernea, *Nubian Ethnographies*. (Prospect Height, IL: Waveland Press, 1991), p. 142.
3. “gurbatti” is borrowed from the Arabic term meaning “stranger”. Note that there is no indigenous Dongolawi or Kenzi lexeme denoting “stranger”.
4. Sayyed Bushrab, personal communication, Berlin, 2011; also experienced during the celebrations of the Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage.
5. DP16.3 For the system of reference, see section 1.5. Taha A. Taha, “Proverbs in a threatened Language Variety in Africa”, *California Linguistic Notes* Vol. XXXVI, No. 1 (Winter 2011), item DP16.3. <http://hss.fullerton.edu/linguistics/cln/pdf/2011/W11%20PDF/Taha-DN%20proverbs.pdf> (last visited on 19 August 2011).
6. Peter Unseth, “Collecting, Using, and Enjoying Proverbs”, *SIL Forum for Language Fieldwork* (2008-002), p. 4. <http://www.sil.org/silepubs/Pubs/50501/SILForum2008-002.pdf> (last visited on 17 January 2011).
7. Peter Unseth, “How to Collect 1000 Proverbs Quickly: Field Methods for Eliciting and Collecting Proverbs”, *GIAL Electronic Notes Series*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007), p. 1. <http://www.gial.edu/GIALens/vol1-1/Unseth-Proverbs-Article.pdf> (last visited on 17 January 2011).
8. DP23.5. ElShafie ElGuzuli, Xannaag.

9. Salwa Ahmed, *Educational and Social Values expressed by Proverbs in two Cultures: Knowledge and Use of Proverbs in Sudan and England*. PhD thesis. TU Berlin. (2005), p. 28.
10. Proverbs taken from Hamid Xabir's collection are marked by the capital letters HX plus the number in his publication. The work of the Dongola Association for Nubian Culture and Heritage is introduced in Marcus Jaeger, "Indigenous Efforts to Revitalize and Digitize the Nubian Languages", *Sudan Studies Association Newsletter*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2008), 13-22.
11. Professor Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz, personal communication, Dehmiit, 2010. However after the Egyptian revolution the Kenuzi became more interested in my research and enjoyed giving me further proverbs.
12. Andreas and Waltraud Kronenberg, "Preliminary Report on Anthropological Field-Work 1961-62 in Sudanese Nubia", *Kush – Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service*, Vol. 11 (1963), 304.
13. DP1.1 (HX1).
14. DP1.2 (HX2).
15. DP28.2 (HX60).
16. KP4.4 (without source).
17. KP4.5 (Muhammad Sobhi, Elephantine; written down by Goo-Grauer).
18. KP5.2 (Ali Ahmad Ali, Elephantine; written down by Goo-Grauer).
19. DP6.3 (HX114).
20. DP26.10 See also Taha, "Proverbs in a threatened Language".
21. Salwa, *Educational and Social Values*, p. 201; proverb 175/179 with inconsistent numbering.
22. Taha, "Proverbs in a threatened Language".
23. DP7.6 (HX127).
24. For example see Salwa, *Educational and Social Values*, proverb 152.
25. KP9.21 (Muhammad Abdu, Toshka).
26. Sondra Hale, *Nubians: A Study in Ethnic Identity*. (Khartoum: Institute of African and Asian Studies, 1973), p. 36. Similar sentiments may be found in proverb DP7.6.
27. Personal communication from a Kenzi man from Dabood, 2002.
28. Personal communication in Alexandria, 2005. The comment was given at an early stage of her research.
29. Personal communication at Aswan from a Kenzi of Dabood, at a UNESCO conference, 2009.
30. DP9.9 (HX61).
31. DP9.10 (HX84).
32. KP5.4 (St60).
33. KP20.8 (Ismaa'iil Al'Abaadii, Dabood).
34. DP30.2 (name withheld).
35. Ahmed S. al-Shahi, "Proverbs and Social Values in a Northern Sudanese Village", in Ian Gunnison and Wendy James, eds., *Essays in Sudan Ethnography presented to Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard*. (New York: Humanities Press, 1972), p. 103.

36. Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs – a Handbook* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 138.
37. Leonard N. Bartlotti, “Negotiating Pakhto: Proverbs, Islam and the Construction of Identity among Pashtuns”. A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Wales. (Oxford/UK, 2000), p. 250.
38. KP30.4 (‘Abdel Rahman ‘Awwad, Siyaala).
39. DP6.2 (ElShafie ElGuzuli, Xannaag).
40. Kabtood, in 2000.
41. Dabood, in 2000.
42. My informant was the late Umm Hamdi; personal; communication, Alexandria, 2002.
43. Personal communication, Gumma’ Ibrahim, Khartoum, 2009.
44. I am thinking particularly of the Dongola area, and especially from 2009 onwards.
45. DP17.1 (HX54).
46. DP17.2 (HX37).
47. KP10.8 (Mahmud Muhammad, Toshka).

CHAPTER TWO

SETTLEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE SUDAN

HANA AL-MOTASIM

Sudan is a country that has witnessed huge population displacements, some due to natural causes and others due to a multitude of ill-devised government policies. The worst form of displacement the country witnessed however has been war-related displacements; these have been devastating both in terms of scale and effect. An estimated six million were reported to have been displaced in 2005. This was the highest number reported worldwide. It constituted fourteen per cent of the country's total population, placing Sudan on the map as the country of displacement par excellence with millions of displaced trekking its vast terrain in search of a suitable place to relocate, or a better place to position themselves. In these extreme conditions queries arise concerning notions of settlement, questions such as "what does 'place' and 'home' mean in such a country, and to whom?" In this paper we endeavor to understand how displacement may affect and redefine such notions. The underlying questions are concerned with the meanings of place and home, and the techniques developed to reconstitute these meanings in circumstances far from the ordinary. We question the links between place and home, identity and territoriality, wealth and investments; how these concepts are played out in conditions of displacement, and how they might come to affect the postwar urbanism that begins to emerge.

Introduction

Sudan is a country to which the subject of displacement is central to understanding it. With one fifth of its population currently displaced or subject to displacement, Sudan needs to come to terms with this legacy. As a country which has witnessed wars and instability since its independence and as one still marred by wars erupting in the western region of Darfur,