

riae & equestris artis bene gnarus' (Men. 2696); 1838: *süvar* (suvar) 'cavalier; chevalier' (Hind. 277).

Abl.: 1680: *süvärlik* (süwärlük) 'hippeutrica aut peritia ejus; equitatio' (Men. 2697); 1838: *süvarlık* (suvarlek) 'façon ou manière d'être à cheval' (Hind. 277).

Zus.: 1680: *süvär olmak* (süwār ol.) 'equitare, inequicare, con-scendere equum' (Men. 2696); 1838: *süvar olmak* (suvar olmak) 'monter, aller à cheval' (Hind. 277).

547. *süväri* (1680), *sivari* (1890) 'Reiter; Kavallerie, Reiterei; Schiffskapitän' = npers. *suwāre* 'Reiter' + *suwāri* 'Reiten; Ritterschaft' (Räsänen VEWb. 434: *suwāri*). — 1680: *süväri* (süwāri) 'hippeutrica, aut peritia ejus; equitatio' (Men. 2697); 1838: *süvari* (suvari) 'façon ou manière d'être à cheval' (Hind. 277); 1863: *süvari* (suvari) 'cavalier, soldat de cavalerie; cavalerie; capitaine d'un navire (de guerre ou marchand)' (Mall. I 622); 1890: *süvari* (suvari; on prononce aussi *sivari*) 'cavalier; capitaine d'un vaisseau de guerre' (Youss. 535). — Dial.: ams. *sivari* AAT 254; bal. *sivari* ADM I 202; kast. *sivari* AAT 253; or. *sivari* KDT 345; tok. *süvari* STT 262.

GROVER HUDSON

LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION AND THE SEMITIC PREHISTORY OF ETHIOPIA

1. INTRODUCTION

This article reviews the principal works relating to the classification of the Semitic languages of Ethiopia, in order to make available a broad overview for the information of those interested in Ethiopian prehistory, especially the period just before the written record begins. For an historical reconstruction of this and earlier periods, language classification is of great importance¹. In the course of the present review, certain aspects of the prevalent theory concerning the classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages come into question, and revisions in the theory which are indicated by recent scholarship are examined for their ability to make more understandable recent findings of archeologists and other non-linguists, which are otherwise much less satisfactorily explained.

Following this brief introduction, section 2 consists of a discussion of linguistic work through 1967, and work continuing in that tradition. Section 3 considers the classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages indicated by that work, from the point of view of widely accepted knowledge about the prehistory of the region. Then, in section 4, some recent work on language classification

¹ Cf. the conclusion of Wyatt MacGaffey (1970: 111) that *certain modes of thought, as applied to the racial history of northeast Africa, govern the methods of investigation and, very largely, the results. The approach... attributes priority to data elements in the order: culture, race, language. This order should be reversed. Only in language do we have at the moment both the information and the method which permit classifications in which we can have some degree of confidence and from which relationships can be traced.*

is reviewed, work which marks a considerable departure from previous ideas. Section 5 considers the implications of this recent work with regard to its apparent contradiction of the prevalent ideas, and in light of recent findings in Ethiopian archaeology and cultural history. The conclusion is reached in section 6 that much linguistic and historical research now argues against the common theory that Ethiopian Semitic languages derive from migrations of Semitic South Arabian people to Ethiopia in a time as late as 700 B. C. The evidence suggests, in fact, that Ethiopia should once more be given consideration as the possible Semitic homeland.

The only type of language classification which has relevance for prehistory is known as 'genetic' classification. Genetic classifications are in a sense reconstructions of the historical divergence of related languages from a common source, or a single 'parent language'. Unlike other types, genetic classifications are (i) non-arbitrary, since there is only one correct classification; (ii) exhaustive, since no languages can be left out; and (iii) unique, since no language occurs in more than one group. (Joseph Greenberg 1957: 66). The best evidence of the divergent linguistic developments on which genetic classifications are based results from actual geographical separation of a group of speakers of a language either by migration, or the intrusion of another people between them and other speakers of the language. In time a new language develops among the separated group. Sharp social and political divisions may yield similar linguistic results. Such separations or divisions are represented best by the 'family-tree' diagram, and the diagram then represents a theory of language classification, or a theory of historical linguistic divergence of the languages represented, and mirrors geographical, political, and sociological developments in the history of the speakers of the languages².

There is a theory of language 'separation' or divergence which to a considerable extent denies the possibility of non-arbitrary

² See J. Greenberg (1957) for a thorough, but still concise discussion of the principles and methods involved in determining „Genetic relationships among languages” (Chapter 3), and of „The problem of linguistic sub-groupings” (Chapter 4).

genetic classification: the so-called 'diffusion' or 'wave theory'. Chaim Rabin has best presented the point-of-view of this theory in Semitic linguistics. He argued (Rabin 1963: 115) that the divisions in the Semitic language family are commonly due to 'diffusion' rather than migration: that „the Semitic area was a homogeneous whole,” which, with the passage of time and continuous dialect differentiation, saw the rise of today's many distinct languages. This conception sees language diversification as taking place through the spread of uncountable minute changes or waves of changes, which move through the speech community in differing patterns, and with originate at different points. Those who hold this view claim, therefore, that the linguistic features which can be used to group and to genetically classify languages will continually oppose one another, now grouping languages A and B against C and D, now A and C against B and D, and now A and D against B and C. It is the prevalence of this view that to a large degree accounts for the absence of strong claims about the genetic relevance and historical interpretability of some of the Semitic and Ethiopian Semitic language classifications which have been proposed, and for the apparent reluctance to employ the family-tree diagram in presenting them.

Nevertheless, since migrations and sharp social-political separations *have* taken place, and since new, distinct languages and language groups *have* arisen, and most significantly, since serious genetic language classification is an important tool in historical reconstruction, in the following pages I have employed the family-tree diagram to make very clear the positions which linguists have taken regarding the classification of the Ethiopian Semitic languages.

Briefly, as for wave-theory, the completely reasonable likelihood should be noted that no language of the Proto-Semitic period, at least 5000—4000 B. C., could have maintained uniformity when spoken in an extensive area. The standard of communication between speakers spread in thinly populated extensive areas simply could not have been great enough in ancient times to have permitted the maintenance in such areas of the linguistic uniformity upon which this theory depends. Wherever communications were great enough, even in a more limited area

such as, for example, Mesopotamia, this required a considerably high level of civilization which archeology would probably by now have discovered and defined. Proto-Semitic, as any large family proto-language, must have been spoken in a very limited area, and any spread out of that area must have soon led to linguistic divergence, and the first, irreversible steps in the rise of a new Semitic language.

Genetic language classification schemes may remain only theories, of course, even though at times they gain widespread acceptance owing to their ability to explain not only the linguistic facts, but also such facts as can be marshalled from archaeology and other historical investigation. Naturally, theories of genetic language classification and prehistory are mutually strengthened if they support one another, and are weakened if they conflict. The correlation is rarely perfect. *Method in prehistoric study*, said Ward Goodenough (1970: 253, speaking of Indo-European),

...rests first on how acceptable our inferences are, as judged by their compatibility with all forms of reliable evidence, and second on how plausible they are, as judged by existing knowledge of social and other processes, induced and verified in empirical study. Reliable evidence is never complete and usually allows of several acceptable but mutually contradictory inferences. Knowledge of how the phenomena in question generally behave is rarely what we would like it to be. Nevertheless, both the quantity and variety of evidence continually grow, as does our scientific sophistication, so that prehistoric problems become increasingly capable of resolution as we reexamine them in the light of new information and expanded intellectual resources.

We will be mainly concerned with the broad conclusions reached in the work to be summarized in sections 2—5, hence the details of linguistic and other evidence brought forward in that work is beyond the scope of the present article, and will be discussed only where particularly necessary.

2. THE CLASSIFICATION OF ETHIOPIAN SEMITIC FROM WORK THROUGH 1967

The Semitic language group is one of six which make up the Hamito-Semitic or Afro-Asiatic family of languages (see Figure 1)³.

³ I accept here the conclusions reached by Fleming (1969), that the former Cushitic group should be divided into two, the former

The overall classification of languages within the Semitic group cannot be considered here. It is the southern branch of Semitic which will be of importance. Traditionally, the Semitic group has been divided into North-east (including Akkadian, or Assyrian-Babylonian), North-west (including Hebrew and Aramaic), and South-west branches. South-west Semitic is then divided into Northern (Arabic) and Southern groups (including modern South Arabian languages, and Ethiopian) (Moscatti *et al* 1964: 13). Or, by slightly different terminology, but with identical branching, the two large sub-groups in the North are opposed by South Semitic, which is divided into a South-east and a South-west. South-east includes Ethiopian and South Arabian, and South-west, Arabic (Leslau 1956: 8). The latter scheme is illustrated in Figure 1. Note that this system of classification complements completely the geographical distribution of the Semitic languages.

There was at one time argument that Akkadian, indeed, is in significant ways closer to Ethiopian Semitic than it is to other northern Semitic languages. First put forward by Haupt (1878: 247), who claimed that „Assyrian is the Sanskrit of the Semitic idioms, Ethiopic [= Ge'ez] ranking next to it in point of antiquity”, this thesis was further argued by Christian (1920), and Lambert (1921). Though Akkadian and Ethiopian Semitic are at great distance from each other geographically, Christian (1920: 738) also believed that the two groups shared remarkably similar ‘older’ linguistic features, and he grouped them together, along with South Arabian, in an „Altere” Semitic group, calling the rest, including Arabic and Hebrew, „Jüngere” Semitic. Cantineau (1932) and Leslau (1959), however, argued that the linguistic features shared between Akkadian and Ethiopian represent developments which have occurred independently in the two groups rather than during a period of common ancestry, and that a classification scheme which puts them together is not only at variance with geography, but with history as well.

Still, the genetic relevance of the classification of Semitic which parallels the modern-day geographical distribution of the

Western Cushitic (or Western Sidamo) languages being set up as a new, coordinate branch of Hamito-Semitic under the name ‘Omotic’.

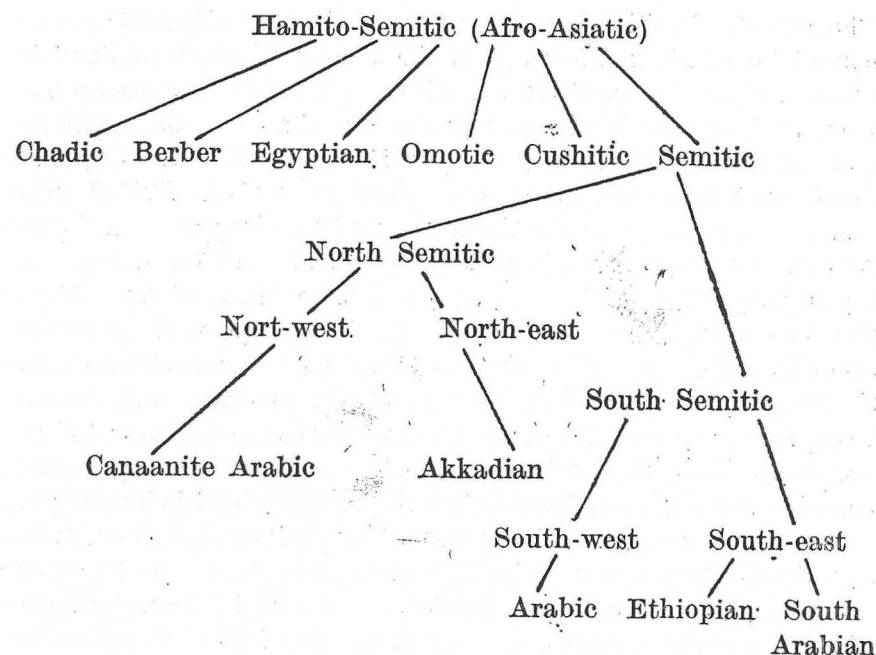


Figure 1: Typical organization of the Hamito-Semitic (Afro-Asiatic) family of languages, and the Semitic group.

languages has been continually doubted. O'Leary (1923: 22) said that the „philological affinities between Abyssinian and Assyrian... remain and unsolved problem". More recently, G. Castellino (1962: 139—150) claimed an old and close connection between Akkadian and Ethiopian. Sabatino Moscati *et al* (1964: 13) said that a classification scheme like Figure 1 is merely geographical, since „Ancient South Arabian is in several respects in agreement with North Arabic and at variance with Ethiopic".

Work on the classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages has focused on four particular concerns: (i) the correctness of a North-South division within the group, (ii) the position of the 'Gurage' languages and their subclassification, (iii) the question of which modern language, if any, is the direct descendant of Ge'ez, and (iv) the relationship of Ethiopian Semitic with South Arabian languages, ancient and modern.

Out first concern here is the relationship between Ethiopian

and South Arabian. Almost everyone has agreed that the Ethiopian Semitic languages derive from migrations of South Arabian Semitic people to Africa over two thousand years ago. According to A. K. Irvine (1965: 179), this was first suggested by the earliest European scholar of Ethiopic, Job Ludolf, in the late sixteenth century. August Dillmann wrote in 1857 (edition of 1907: 3) that the migrations from the Yemen had „transplanted" Semitic speech to Ethiopia, and the principal contemporary authorities are agreed on this (Leslau 1968d: 9—10; Ullendorff 1968: 3—4). The features shared between the Semitic languages of South Arabia and Ethiopia, illustrated by Leslau (1943), reinforce this understanding. The date generally given for these migrations is 500 B. C. $\pm$ 200, a data based on the North Ethiopian epigraphic evidence as interpreted by Glaser, Conti Rossini, and Littmann (Ullendorff 1955: 11).

Ancient or Epigraphic South Arabian is known in five dialects witnessed in inscriptions. There has not been consensus on relationships between modern Ethiopian languages and particular ancient South Arabian dialects, though the Sabaean dialect is prominent in the early North Ethiopian inscriptions (Drewes 1958: 115). There are five modern South Arabian languages. Soqotri, spoken on the island of Soqatra in the Indian Ocean off the South Arabian coast, is commonly given an independent position relative to the four others: Mehri, Shahri, Bathari, and Harsusi, spoken in areas along the south-eastern South Arabian coast (see Figure 2). According to Bender (1970: 30), these five are probably a cluster of near-mutually intelligible dialects.

Ethiopian Semitic includes some twelve to fifteen languages, depending on the status as language or dialect accorded the speech of some Gurage groups. (For comments on mutual intelligibility within Gurage, see Hetzron (1972: 2—4).) In northern Ethiopia are Tigrinya (centered in Tigre province), Tigre (in northern Eritrea), and Ge'ez (extinct as a spoken language since at least the thirteenth century). In central Ethiopia are Amharic (centered along a line from Gondar to Addis Ababa), Argobba (spoken today near Ankober, Shoa, and perhaps still in an area south of Harar), Gafat (among the last speakers of which, from west of Debre Markos, Leslau recorded in 1946), Harari (in and around the city

of Harar), and the group of languages commonly known as Gurage (centered in an area approximately 100 miles south-west of Addis Ababa), including Cha'ä, Soddo, Wolane, etc. That Gurage is a group of distinct languages and not a 'dialect cluster' (as is sometimes said) was suggested by Cohen (1931: 100—103) and made explicit by Leslau (1960: 89), who used the term „language cluster". The best presently available linguistic map of the region is in A. N. Tucker and M. A. Bryan (1956).

The influence of the Cushitic languages has been frequently noted as perhaps the most prominent characteristic of all the Ethiopian Semitic languages, but especially of those of central

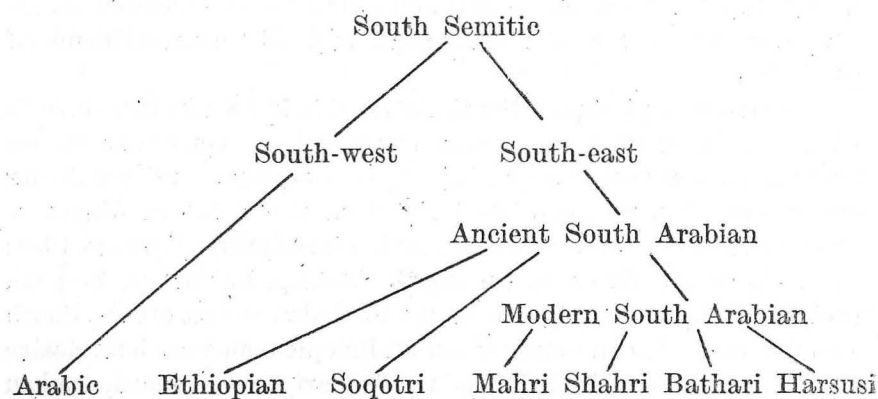


Figure 2: Typical classification of South Semitic, showing the position of Ethiopian relative to Ancient and Modern South Arabian

Ethiopia. This influence is „traceable in all the domains, in the phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary" (Leslau 1968d: 23). Of special interest in this is the apparent pervasive influence of Cushitic which results in syntax — often thought to be the most rigid or conservative area of language — „far removed from all Semitic conceptions" (Ullendorff 1955: 223). The southernmost languages, being out of contact with Semitic languages of northern Ethiopia and of South Arabia, should reasonably show this influence more clearly, as has been argued (Dillmann 1907: 2—3; Leslau 1945b). Leslau (1968d: 24) said that, indeed, „Gurage gives the impression of being of the Sidamo type rather than of a Semitic

type." (Ge'ez conforms most closely to the Semitic linguistic type, and Leslau (1953: 164) said that the northern languages preserve better the older Ethiopian language-type. Nevertheless, the presence of numerous apparently conservative features in Southern Ethiopian Semitic languages was noted, and discussed in detail by Leslau (1951).

The first thorough consideration of the internal classification of Ethiopian Semitic was that of Marcel Cohen (1931), and this work remains of great importance today. Cohen charted the distribution of numerous linguistic features, finding little consistent agreement among them. His conclusions on classification were quite cautious, and he emphasized the need for additional descriptive study of many of the languages. Cohen (1931: 48—52) concluded grouping Tigre, Tigrinya and Ge'ez in the North, and Harari with Eastern Gurage (Selti, Wolane, Urbareg) as another group in the South. He considered Amharic to be a diluted southern extension of the northern group. He thought reasonable, though probably beyond proof, a tradition that the Eastern Gurage came from the Harar region. Western Gurage (Chaha, Eža, Gumer, Gyeta, Ennemor), Gafat, and Argobba he left unclassified, but indicated a position for these comparable to that of Amharic. Cohen considered it possible that the northern group of three languages and the Eastern Gurage/Harari are descendants of different though related ancient South Arabian languages, i.e. the products of different migrations of South Arabians.

Leslau, who has provided much of the essential descriptive studies which Cohen asked for, has since 1945 offered a classification of Ethiopian Semitic which differs from Cohen's in its use of a broad North-South division: Tigre, Tigrinya, and Ge'ez comprise his Northern Ethiopian, and the rest Southern Ethiopian (Leslau 1945a: 1). He has not claimed that this division is necessarily a characteristic of genetic classification, but of typological, or geographical classification. If the division into Northern and Southern Ethiopian was genetically valid, it would mean that the northern three languages are descendants of one language, and the several southern languages of another. Leslau (1960: 12—14) cites several distinctive linguistic features which might justify this division, such as, in phonology, laryngeal consonants in the

northern languages, almost absent in the south; in morphology, pluralization of nouns by internal root change in the north, a process not seen in the south. Leslau (1968d: 12) expressed the opinion that the two groups are, however, derivable from a single ancient South Arabian language imported into Ethiopia; i.e., there was a Proto-Ethiopian Semitic language. He added Zway to the inventory of Eastern Gurage languages, and showed a close relationship between Argobba and Amharic, with Amharic being the more innovative of the two (Leslau 1960).

H. J. Polotsky (1938: 175) has stated that the differences between Eastern Gurage with Harari, and Western Gurage are more apparent than real, as are the similarities which suggest a sister relationship between Amharic and Western Gurage. He argued that reference to Northern and Southern Ethiopian groups is permissible only if the terms refer to „present habitat of the respective languages”, or, if „with reference to distinctive linguistic features,” only from a „purely static and descriptive point of view”. Ullendorff (1955: 224) said that Polotsky had concurred in general with his opinion that modern Ethiopian Semitic languages have a roughly uniform relationship with a single Proto-Ethiopian Semitic language.

Edward Ullendorff's 1955 comparative phonology largely attempted to show that there is no North-South branching in the Ethiopian Semitic family tree. Since he fully accepted the idea that Semitic languages entered Ethiopia in the migrations from South Arabia in ca. 700 B. C., the historical basis of the issue as Ullendorff saw it concerned (i) whether at least two ancient South Arabian languages entered Ethiopia at that time, or (ii) there developed at first two proto-languages from the one which was introduced. In either case, if there were two, they may justify the separate Northern and Southern groups. Strictly on the basis of comparison of the sound systems of the various languages, and treating Gurage as one, he found it possible to conclude that: „... there... sufficient evidence to assume that the modern Semitic Ethiopian languages are of uniform origin, i.e., they belong to the same group, which simply means that they represent the differentiations of one ancient language: Ge'ez.” (Ullendorff 1955: 224). The striking differences among the modern languages, and

especially the divergence from Ge'ez of the southern languages, he said, are sufficiently explained by their independent development, and by their particular Cushitic „substrata”, the Cushitic languages which they replaced.

The third important concern is the position of the Gurage languages. The Gurage group is of particular interest because of the great linguistic diversity which it reveals within a relatively small area — perhaps eight thousand square miles, and relatively small population, according to Leslau (1957: 149) approximately 375,000. Also of interest are apparent old linguistic relationships with Harari far to the east, and with Gafat (now extinct) to the north, and the isolation of the Gurage languages until recently within a Cushitic-speaking area. Leslau has worked extensively in the region of the various Gurage languages, and has noted that since the geographical area is small, „it is, therefore, the more surprising to observe the great diversity of religions, languages and tribes.” (Leslau 1950: 11).

A number of features of Proto-Ethiopian and even Proto-Semitic have been traced in Gurage languages, such as items enumerated in Leslau (1951), the main verb markers identified in Leslau (1967) and Hetzron (1968), and archaic vowel of the jussive verb hypothesized in Leslau (1968a). The absence of these features in northern Ethiopian is of interest, particularly if Gurage is assumed to be derived from the northern languages, and thought to be in general more innovative under the influence of intimate contact with its close Cushitic neighbors.

It was noted that Cohen (1931) had set up two large Gurage groups: Eastern and Western. He recognized that Soddo (formerly called Aymallal in the literature) had a separate position which he considered intermediate to the two groups, calling in North-eastern Gurage. Cohen believed that these divisions within Gurage pointed to their different though parallel evolution from the Proto-Ethiopian Semitic language. If Gurage languages could be associated linguistically with particular northern Ethiopian Semitic languages, as, it will be seen, popular historical theory suggests, he considered the association to be of Eastern Gurage with Tigre. (Cohen 1931: 47—48; 100—103).

Gurage, said Ullendorff (1955: 2) „shows strange points of

contact with Tigrinya in the North". The several features which Ullendorff believed to indicate a close connection between Gurage and Northern Ethiopian Tigrinya naturally constituted a major part of his argument against Northern and Southern groups in the classification of Ethiopian Semitic. Leslau (1951) had concluded that it is only Amharic of the Southern languages which differs consistently from the „northern type”.

Leslau (1968c, 1969b), on the basis of common features of phonology, morphology and vocabulary in various languages of the Gurage group and not found in other southern Ethiopian languages, including Gafat and Harari, has recently argued that the various Gurage languages do constitute a unitary group, being probably descended from a single northern Ethiopian language. The association between Eastern Gurage and Harari, and between Soddo and Gafat would be then matters of convergence, or de-

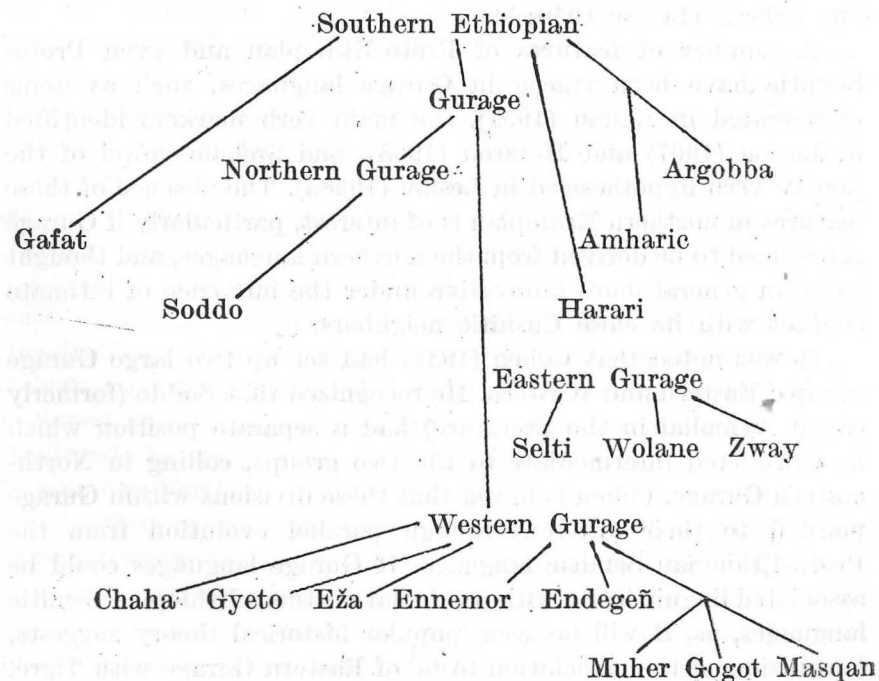


Figure 3: Classification of Southern Ethiopian following Leslau (1960) and (1969b)

scriptive classification, and the result of gradual differentiation with a once linguistically uniform Gurage community accompanied by periods of close association between Gurages of the East and the Hararis, and between northern Gurages and the speakers of Gafat. Leslau's classification accepts the Western, Eastern and Northern groups set up by Cohen, and also sets up a sub-group in Western Gurage (1968c: 1). Figure 3 illustrates this classification, with an independent genetic relationship shown for Gafat and Harari, exclusive of their respective similarities to Northern and Eastern Gurage.

Our last topic in this section is the position of Ge'ez: whether Ge'ez is the direct descendant of the Proto-Ethiopian Semitic language, or just one of three sister Semitic languages in northern Ethiopia, though the one which happens to have an ancient literature. According to A. I. Drewes (1958: 115), Ge'ez may have „existed already in the fifth century B. C., contemporary with Sabaeen". If the supposed migrations of ca. 500 B. C. brought a uniform language, or only slightly varying South Arabian dialects to Ethiopia, and since Ge'ez is the only Ethiopian Semitic language attested in this early period, then the other languages should, perhaps, be derivable from Ge'ez, or dialects close to Ge'ez, and many unusual linguistic features in Southern Ethiopian should be explainable in terms of developments of Ge'ez features, or as borrowings from Cushitic neighbor languages. The southern languages besides Amharic have had hundreds of years of independent development since Ge'ez disappeared as a spoken language in the Ethiopian Dark Ages following the collapse of the Aksumite Empire. Ge'ez might, however, be presumed to have exercised a certain conservative influence on languages of Christian Ethiopia because of its uninterrupted use in the liturgy of the Ethiopian Church.

The question of the relationships among the three northern languages has concerned whether Tigre or Tigrinya is the direct descendant of Ge'ez, as should be the case if a single South Arabian language was carried by South Arabians into northern Ethiopia. Tigrinya occupies the territory probably occupied in early times by speakers of Ge'ez (assuming this was about Aksum). This question is of special interest to Ullendorff because of his insistence

permanent footholds there since the fifth century B. C." He referred to the South Arabian migrant-colonizers as the tribe known as 'Habashat' (a name attested in several of the inscriptions), who gave their name to the region: Abyssinia. This position regarding the migrations is maintained with certainty by Francis Anfray (1968: 365—366) in his recent summary of archaeological work in Ethiopia. Standard texts such as Murdock (1959: 13) accept this thesis, and the standard handbooks on Ethiopia maintain it (e. g. Lipsky 1962: 7). Murdock explained the assumption that the South Arabians were „conquerors" or „colonizers" of the region by the claim that the Aksumite civilization of the first to seventh centuries A. D. was „of the Southern Arabian type". Some of the presumed South Arabian elements mentioned by Murdock, and by others, are building practices, the cultivation of barley and wheat, milking, forms of political organization, and, of course, language and writing. (Murdock 1959: 13; Anfray 1968: 365) A specialist in South Arabian archaeology, G. W. van Beek (1967: 114), adducing instances of similarity between South Arabian and Aksumite pottery, sculpture, and architecture, concluded that „the basic structure of ancient Ethiopian culture of the historic period was South Arabian".

A commonly accepted historical theory may also support the typical classification of the Gurage languages: that Gurage, of Leslau's Southern Ethiopic, is nevertheless a group of languages of northern Ethiopian extraction. According originally to Alaqa Tayya (1927: 49), the North Ethiopian Semitic group which settled in Gurageland was a fourteenth century Tigrean army led by one Azmach Sabat. The army set out, he says, from the town of Gur'a — thus the name Gura-ge — during the reign of Amda Seyon (1314—1344). Conti Rossini (1928: 283) also put forward the military colony idea, but, noting the Western Gurage clan name 'Gura', suggested that this clan is named for the town in Tigre. The clan 'Gura' is then the source of the group-name, with the suffix *-ge* 'country' added. Conti Rossini proposed that the Harari might also be the result of a military colony of the same period. William Shack (1966: 5—6) accepted this version in his book describing Gurage culture. He said that the Gurages „are basically of Sidamo stock, and [their] territory... was once

inhabited by the Sidamo tribes who formerly occupied the whole of Western and Southern Ethiopia".

Gurage (as can be seen from the map in Tucker and Bryan 1956) is surrounded by Cushitic groups: Hadiyya, Kambata, Alaba, Sidamo, and Galla. The modern geographical distribution of Galla shows that not only probably Agaw, but also Galla once effectively cut off the Gurage region from contact with Semitic northern Ethiopia. The assumption of a Sidamn substratum might explain some linguistic development possibly shared between Gurage languages and Harari, since the original substrata of Gurage, it has been hypothesized by Leslau (1952: 64), were Galla and „Sidamo", and of Harari, Somali and „Sidamo"⁵. Subsequently Harar was invaded by the Galla, whose language new influences Harari. Thus, by the theory of the fourteenth century Tigrean military colonies implanted among the Cushites, the similarities between Gurage languages and Harari, and the differences, can be to a degree explained, and the whole thing nicely harmonized with the connections with northern Ethiopian Semitic languages. Leslau (1952: 65) noted the suggestion of Conti Rossini (1937: 132) that the linguistic domain of the „Sidamo" languages was formerly farther north than it is today, and this might account for some possibly „Sidamo" features in even Amharic.

An overall Semitic spread, or movement south, including the Amhara, Argobba, and Gafat, is prehistory. But this has been assumed to have begun during the ninth century A. D., with the decline of the Aksumite Empire. This decline was said by Conti Rossini (1928: 281 ff.) to have been due to the invasion of the Beja, from the north, and the rise of Arab-Muslim imperialism, out of the east. Trimmingham (1965: 48—49) expresses this hypothesis vividly:

⁵ 'Sidamo' here refers to the group of Eastern Cushitic languages including Sidamo-proper, variously 'Sidamo', 'Burji-Sidamo', and 'Highland East Cushitic' (Bender 1971) in the literature; the group includes Hadiyya, Kambata, Alaba, Sidamo, Darasa, and Burji. It is the Hadiyya who today are in closest contact with the Gurages, and who perhaps in the past extended their domain east of their modern-day location south of Gurageland. But it is doubtful that the Hadiyya or another Highland East Cushitic group ever extended as far east as Harar.

Semitized Axumite peoples driven into the hills of Tigray by the Beja invasion extended their civilizing activities to the wild regions south of the capital...; dispossessed of their homes by the invasion of Beja nomads, [they] settled in inaccessible districts of the interior of Tigray, Amhara, and Shoa amongst pagan Agao. These Christian peoples, inheritors of the Axumite tradition, spread the Ge'ez language and the Christian religion deep into the interior and there began that process of fusion which produced the Abyssinian nation.

The historical and linguistic sources so far referred to make possible the internal and external classification of the Ethiopian Semitic languages which is summarized in the tree diagram Figure 4, in which the dotted lines indicate continuing questions.

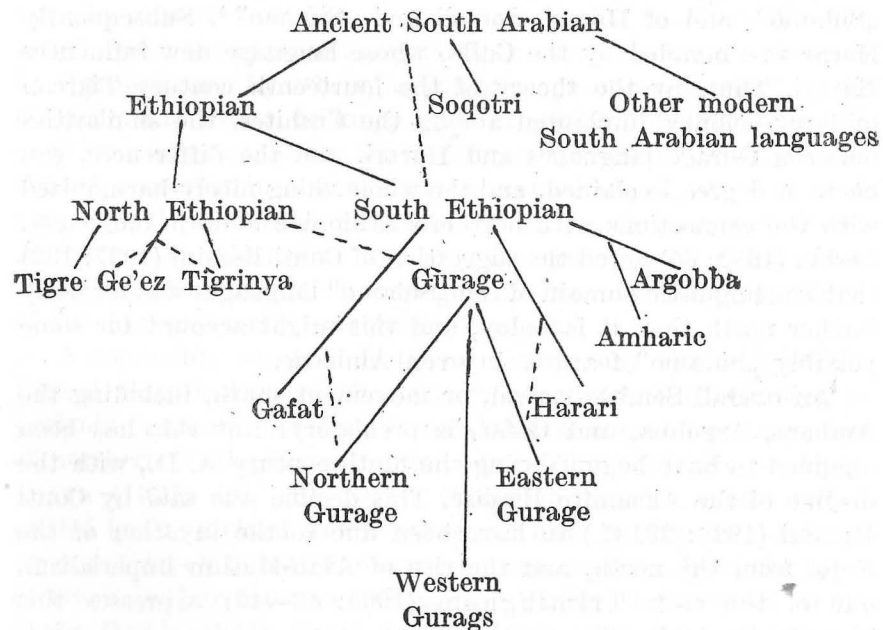


Figure 4: Classification of Ethiopian Semitic indicated by work through 1968; continuing questions shown by dotted lines.

4. SOME RECENT WORK ON LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION

Figure 4 shows the understanding which had developed by the late sixties about the classification of the Ethiopian Semitic languages. The theory regarding language classification did not

owe its justification to considerations of history, but did not hesitate to draw on history for support, and possibly for inspiration. In one case — the accounting for of the Gurage — an historical understanding probably arose in response to the need to explain the language situation. A number of studies in the last several years have begun to question this understanding. And since in some ways the conclusions of these recent works are complementary, taken together they constitute the outline of an alternative theory.

Besides the previously mentioned prevalence of the idea of language diversification by diffusion, another major obstruction to firm conclusions about the genetic relationships between languages within Semitic in general and Ethiopian Semitic in particular has been the widespread belief noted by F. R. Palmer (1958: 120) that „...there are [no] accepted standards by which the relevance of features for comparative statement might be evaluated, and that, in theory at least, the degrees of relationship between the languages could be measured”.

It is this need which Robert Hetzron (1970, 1972) has attempted to fill in justifying the complete set of genetic relationships which he has postulated for Ethiopian Semitic. His work is useful for its description of methods and principles in language classification, as well as for its data and conclusions. Hetzron (1970) insists that „the safest type of genetically relevant isogloss is a morphological innovation, a new phonetic exponent of a morpheme”. He argues that by insisting on the relevance of linguistic features of only this type, the objections which have weakened the force of previous theories can be minimized: „The requirement of identity of exponent and not identity of category guards us against universal tendencies and parallel but independent influences of the same substratum. The requirement of innovation guards us against scattered survivals of ancient phenomena which were elsewhere replaced by innovations”.

Hetzron's conclusions are that (i) South Semitic, consisting of two branches, Ethiopian and South Arabian, is opposed in the Semitic family by East Semitic (Akkadian), and Central Semitic (Arabic, Canaanite and Aramaic); (ii) the Northern and Southern Ethiopian sub-groups of Leslau are historically justified.

even though there was probably a single South Arabian languages from which both derive; the Southern languages perhaps descend from a group which split off very early from the Proto-Ethiopian community: (iii) Gurage is not a unified linguistic group, but instead includes languages of both major branches in Southern Ethiopian; (iv) Ge'ez is an older stage of no other language, but is a sister to the group of Tigre and Tigrinya in Northern Ethiopian⁶. Hetzron's conclusions are best summarized in the family tree diagram he has presented (Hetzron 1972: 119). Amharic and Argobba are grouped with Harari and the Eastern Gurage languages as 'Transversal South Ethiopic'. The speakers of „Amharic migrated least, and remained in contact with the northern Aksumite civilization”.

Hetzron (1970) has hypothesized the series of separations and southerly migrations which would have led to the set of language relationships he proposes. Of particular interest here are the remarks concerning the time of the South Arabian migrations to Ethiopia, and the popular theory on the Gurage. He concludes that „it is probable that the Semitic immigration started much earlier than usually posited”, a conclusion supported by (i) the great diversity among the Ethiopian Semitic languages; (ii) the linguistic features thought to show the separation of the other languages from Ge'ez even before the first century A. D.; and (iii) the fact pointed out by A. Beeston in Ullendorff (1955: 8) that Ge'ez lacks at least one important linguistic feature common to all the Ancient South Arabian dialects.

Hetzron specifically rejects the notion that the Gurage people are descendants of a fourteenth-century group, separated from Northern Ethiopia. This argument is spelled out in Hetzron (1972: 126): (i) the centuries since that time are insufficient to account for the modern differences between Gurage and northern languages; (ii) „linguistically, the Gurage tongues can be proven to be clearly South Ethiopic” (i.e., arguments that substantiate the North-South division also refute the fourteenth-century Gurage derivation idea); (iii) „the Gurages are not homogeneous from

⁶ The argument for the new branching of Semitic is developed in Hetzron (1969a); arguments for the internal classification of Ethiopian Semitic are given in detail in Hetzron (1972).

a linguistic point of view”, comprising parts of both branches of South Ethiopic; (iv) finally (Hetzron 1972: 7), if there was any substance to the etymology of Gurage as from Gur'a, a place in Tigre, the consonant ' would have been preserved as a glottal stop until today in 'Peripheral Western Gurage' languages, which so preserve the old laryngeal; instead there the word is pronounced [gʷəragʷe].

In 1967 there appeared a monograph which, though it may be criticized for some aspects of its argument, certainly deserves notice for its independence, and for the extraordinary extent of its conclusions⁷. A. Murtonen (1967: 73—74) reached the following conclusions: (i) „South Arabic, Soqotri, and Ethiopic have been developing independently of each other since the Proto-Semitic period...; (ii) the connection between North and South Ethiopic also has been rather minimal since those days until less than a millenium ago and (iii) some of the modern South Arabic languages do not derive from the epigraphically attested ancient South Arabic dialects. (iv) „Moreover,... Gurage and Tigre have been living apart from the rest of Ethiopic for long periods, and since ancient times...; (v) the original home of the Semitic speaking nations was probably the Horn of Africa...”

These conclusions were reached on the basis of comparison of various features of the three main groups of South-east Semitic: Ethiopian, Soqotri, and other modern South Arabian languages. The phonological evidence presented consists of a number of phonemes lacking in one or the other group. Within morphology, differences in the pronoun, verb, and noun declension systems are cited among the three groups. Finally, a survey of vocabulary suggested the same independent relationships to Murtonen and also a possible relationship between South Arabian and North Arabic closer than between the former and Ethiopian Semitic.

Also of interest is Murtonen's hypothesis about the historical basis of the indicated languages relationships. His interpretation (1967: 74) is that „the Semitic nations... never formed quite close

⁷ In view of the generally unfavorable review given by Hetzron (1969c) to Murtonen (1967), it must be emphasized that the idea that their work is complementary is purely my own interpretation.

unity even in what is commonly called the Proto-Semitic period". At first glance this does not seem much different from traditional understanding of possible dialect differentiation in a proto-language period, but the preface to the monograph, written last, tells how any branching or even wave diagram would fail to show relationships „in terms of areal units, whether they be regarded as dialects or languages, mutually influencing each other and in earliest times changing structurally in rapid succession as a consequence of changing their nearest contacts..."⁸ This historical explanation, along with the associated temporizations that „its is not necessary to visualize... the departure of South Ethiopic from North Ethiopic, or of Tigre from Ge'ez, as having taken place in so remote an antiquity as some statements in this work suggest"; that „parts of South Ethiopic... have left the Proto-Semitic stage comparatively recently"; or that „it is conceivable that ancestors of Asiatic Semites perhaps had reached the Fertile Crescent during a period which can be termed Proto-Semitic", all suggest that the author was aware of the difficulties of making his linguistic conclusions compatible with understandings about the prehistory of Ethiopia,

⁸ Cf. similarly also B. W. Andrzejewski (1964: 137) on the relationship of Galla to other Cushitic languages: *...it is possible that the relationship between Galla and the neighbouring languages is not that of direct descent from a common parent language, but... might be a result of some kind of intimate and prolonged contact, whose intensity would be reflected in the degree to which common characteristics are shared... The nature of such... contact might have consisted of a series of linguistic fusions, divisions and developments upon a series of shifting nomadic substrata, extending over a long period.*

Since linguistic situations creating such 'mixed languages' are virtually unevicenced in the linguistic historical record, this sort of hypothesis, while allowable, may be best understood in the context of attempts by linguists to make sense of linguistic diversity and divergence which a conventional position on classification and prehistory would disallow. As Edward Sapir (1921: 206) wrote: *So long as such direct testimony as we have gives us no really convincing examples of profound morphological influence by diffusion, we shall do well not to put too much reliance in diffusion theories.... Language is probably the most self-contained, the most massively resistant of all social phenomena. It is easier to kill it off than to disintegrate its individual form.*

and of the Semitic peoples. The main point for us to note, however, is that Murtonen considered the linguistic facts to show a separation between Ethiopian and South Arabian Semitic, and a diversification within Ethiopian much older than the ca. 700 B. C. migrations would ordinarily allow.

Other recent work is rather different in perspective and method. Harold Fleming (1968) undertook an extensive glottochronological study with the purpose both to test validity of this method, and to reach conclusions about classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages⁹. Here, again, the important point is that the work is completely independent, and reaches results surprisingly similar in some ways to those of Hetzron and Murtonen. David Cohen (1964: 494) had earlier noted the „inexplicable" contradiction between the conventional theory of Ethiopian Semitic as an extension of Ancient South Arabian, and the figures for lexical comparison he obtained between Soqotri and Tigre — 46 %, and Soqotri and Amharic — 34.5 %. The conventional historical theory and glottochronological method should yield near equal figures in the two comparisons.

In order to apply the method of glottochronology, Fleming first made hypotheses about the relationships among the present-day languages, and between them and Ancient South Arabian. The hypotheses which he made, compatible with previous classification schemes, are that: (1) the Southern and Northern Ethiopian division is correct, and dates to a time before 500 B. C.; (ii) Ge'ez is a daughter of Ancient South Arabian, but not ancestral to any modern languages except possibly Tigrinya and/or Tigre, and

⁹ Glottochronology is a proposed method for obtaining the approximate time of separation of two related languages. The method claims that languages lose items of their basic vocabulary at a near constant rate, and thus comparison of cognates in the basic vocabularies of related languages may reveal their time of separation. While glottochronology has been widely criticised, and claimed invalid by some linguists, the criticisms cannot deny its heuristic value. Its serious practitioners have never denied the necessity of other evidence to corroborate lexicostatistic or glottochronologic indications. Fleming's work (as Bender 1971) is of particular value since it includes the complete word lists used, with the specific judgements about cognation made on each pair of items matched.

(iii) that all of Southern Ethiopian is a „dialect network” with „proper” Gurage (= Chaha), Amharic, and Harari as its extremes.

To test these hypotheses Fleming made cognate comparisons between the relevant languages, using the basic 100-word list developed by Morris Swadesh. The first test compared Tigre with Chaha and Wolane (Western and Eastern Gurage, respectively), to determine the approximate time of separation between Northern and Southern Ethiopian. The second test compared the Northern languages to determine the relationships among Tigre, Tigrinya, and Ge'ez. The third test compared Ethiopian languages with modern South Arabian languages to determine the approximate time of separation of the Ethiopian Semites from Arabian Semites.

Fleming's comparisons suggested that the divergence among South Ethiopian languages alone dates from as early as 300 B. C. to A. D. 100. He considered the „dialect network” assumption confirmed for Southern Ethiopian, and his comparisons between Northern and Southern languages argued for a date of divergence between these two groups from 700 to 300. B. C. Ge'ez, when compared glottochronologically with Tigre and Tigrinya, comes out as „almost certainly” the direct ancestor of Tigrinya, with the status of Tigre „unclear”. Comparisons with modern South Arabian including Soqotri indicated that the split between the South Arabian and Ethiopian branches of South Semitic took place from 3300 B. C. to no later than 2000 B. C., at least a thousand years before the migrations theory would allow it (Fleming 1968: 363). The dates obtained for the break-up of South Ethiopian, along with recognition that the Eastern Gurage languages are closer to Harari than to Chaha, suggested to Fleming that „it would be useful to restrict the term Gurage to the Chaha group, where it would be more appropriate linguistically and ethnographically”; in fact, „the traditional belief that the Gurage group derives from military colonies sent from Gura... in the fourteenth century A. D. ... is probably untenable”. (1968: 369).

Fleming did not fully trust the conclusion regarding the Ethiopian-South Arabian split, apparently not only because of the 1300 year-wide range in the estimated date, but also because it

is „1600 years older than the average estimate of the Semitic migrations to Africa”. On the other hand, he believed that his comparison between Northern and Southern Ethiopian gives results „agreeing very well with archaeological dates”, i.e., for the South Arabian migrations to Ethiopia (1968: 367—68). The comparisons between Ethiopian languages and Soqotri are crucial in this, since Soqotri is relatively isolated on its island in the Arabian Sea, and is presumed to have been so since A. D. 700, the time of arrival of Muslim Arab conquerors in the Arabian coastal region. The other Modern South Arabian languages, today giving way to (North) Arabic, are hundreds of miles away, on the South-Eastern rim of the Arabian peninsula, and may be assumed to have had development independent of Ethiopian Semitic even before the presumed migrations. Soqotri, a probable descendent of attested Ancient South Arabian, and relatively uninfluenced by Arabic, is therefore more likely to yield accurate indication of the Ethiopian-South Arabian split.

Fleming offered three explanations of the surprising difference in basic vocabulary which he found between Ethiopian and Soqotri. First, the available Soqotri word list was difficult to use in glottochronological study because it was impossible to determine which of the several meanings given for some words should be taken as the central meaning in comparisons; second is the unlikely possibility that „isolation on the island of Soqatra speeded up loss of cognates”. Third, and most interesting, is the possibility that the error was in the original hypothesis, that Ethiopian, Soqotri, and other Modern South Arabian languages are all related in Ancient South Arabian parentage. Fleming offered an alternative hypothesis, the situation diagrammed in Figure 5, in which the Proto-South Semitic language is ancestor to Ancient South Arabian. Perhaps the descendant languages of Ancient South Arabian on the Arabian mainland, „disappeared”, giving way to Arabic following the Muslim conquest. (1968: 367) This possibility is consistent with Murtonen's third conclusion: that some of the present-day South Arabian languages are not descended from the ancient epigraphic dialects. If this was the situation, glottochronological tests to show time of nonexistent direct common parentage between Modern South Arabian and Ethiopian would be bound

to produce results much older than the ca. 500 B. C. date expected.

Another glottochronological study was that of M. L. Bender (1966). Taking as his only assumption the position of Ullendorff, that Ge'ez is parent to all modern Ethiopian Semitic, Bender compared in basic vocabulary eight modern languages with Ge'ez, and with each other. The results are difficult to interpret with accuracy, since they are based on the probably misleading assumption of common Ge'ez parentage. But these comparisons indicate a separation between Gurage and Northern Ethiopian some two thousand years ago, followed by the split between Tigre and Tigrinya, with the split between Soddo (Northern Gurage) and Chaha (Western Gurage) still over a thousand years ago. Such results are completely incompatible with the assumption about Ge'ez, and are complementary to the conclusions of Hetzron and Murtonen (and the results of Fleming, though his interpretation of them is different) regarding the separation of Ethiopian from South Arabian, since if there is an identifiable Proto-Ethiopian Semitic period, it should precede by at least some centuries the differentiation into Northern and Southern groups. Bender's results are also complementary to the conclusions of Hetzron, Murtonen, and Fleming about the position of Gurage.

An extensive lexicostatistical study of all Ethiopian languages (Bender 1971) increased the percent cognate figures between Ge'ez-Tigre-Tigrinya by several points, bringing the conclusions about these three more in line with Fleming's, and further supporting that of Hetzron that Ge'ez has no direct descendant. According to the new calculations, this lexical evidence favors the positing of North (Ga'ez, Tigre, Tigrinya), Central (Amharic, Argobba, Gafat), and South Ethiopian Semitic groups.

We must recall here, in consideration of the wide controversy about the use and veracity of lexicostatistics and glottochronology (the calculation of dates of separation from lexicostatistics), that such evidence, like most, is non-conclusive in itself, but only contributes to proofs in conjunction with other sorts of evidence with which it is consistent. It is in this light that our consideration of these studies is intended.

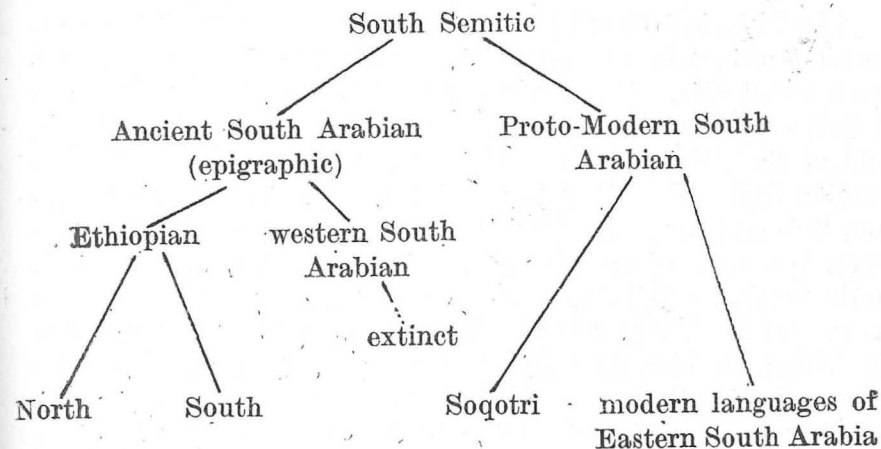


Figure 6: South Semitic as hypothesized by Fleming (1968)

5. NEW IDEAS ON ETHIOPIAN PREHISTORY

The work summarized in section 4 clearly indicates the basic outlines of a new and rather different understanding about the classification of Ethiopian Semitic languages, and their relationship to South Arabian Semitic. It inspires controversy of interest not only to linguists but to students of Ethiopian history as well. It is necessary to consider where the new linguistic claims are in conflict with the historical understanding discussed in section 3, and important to consider whether a resolution of these conflicts is possible. The new conclusions are striking in three ways: (i) the indicated linguistic split between Ethiopian Semitic and South Arabian is well before the time of the apparently attested migrations; (ii) the split between the North and South Ethiopian branches (as dated by glottochronology and as might be suggested by Hetzron's insistence that Ethiopian Semitic linguistic diversity requires that the date of migrations be pushed back) is itself seen as roughly the time of these supposed migrations; and (iii) the linguistic split between Gurage and the north is consistent with that of the rest of the Southern branch of Ethiopian, and certainly not as late as the fourteenth century.

The historical record gives no evidence of the Semitic movements south, into the central Ethiopian highlands, though we have noted above the hypothesis (Conti Rossini 1928) that the impetus for this was the incursions of the Beja out of the north, and of the Arabs, in the east, in the ninth century A. D. According to the linguistic evidence, this seems to be too late. However, it is certainly more likely that the spread south would have begun some centuries after the time of the South Arabian settlement in the north, and in this sense the conclusion of a North-South split in ca. 500 B. C. supports the indicated split between Ethiopian and South Arabian languages in a much earlier period than the supposed migrations.

The new suggestions from linguists that the separation between Ethiopian and South Arabian is much older than previously allowed by the archaeological evidence of such separation brings into question the typical interpretation of this archaeological material as evidence of the migrations which brought Semitic peoples to Ethiopia. The only competing interpretation is that of A. J. Drewes (1962). Drewes' work has been given little notice by other authorities. Anfray's recent summary of the archaeological evidence all but ignores it (Anfray 1968: 363); Ullendorff (1968: 21) limits his consideration of it to the comment that Drewes is „inclined to throw out the baby with the bathwater”. Ullendorff is understandably concerned, since the baby which Drewes would throw out is the common belief that South Arabians in significant numbers did migrate to Ethiopia, at least at the generally accepted time.

Drewes believes that the traditional argument is invalidated by its circularity: an original hypothesis of the South Arabian derivation of Ethiopian Semites made possible the interpretation of the inscriptions, and that interpretation then became proof of the hypothesis. He believes that the inscriptions do not, in fact, necessarily show anything about the ethnic and linguistic origin of Ethiopian Semitic peoples. His argument (Drewes 1962: 89—99) can be summarized as follows. The ancient inscription in northern Ethiopia from the oldest period are in a pure South Arabian script. These are from the time of the height of influence of the 'Sabaean kingdom', and can be the work of South Arabians.

Very early the inscriptions begin to show certain peculiarities which have been interpreted as indicating the beginnings of the evolution of the imported South Arabian language into Ge'ez, but which can equally well be interpreted as showing the developing influence on South Arabian writing practice of an already existent Ethiopian Semitic language. The use of South Arabian terminology in either earlier or later inscriptions does not confirm their South Arabian authorship, and though many South Arabian proper names are employed, many possibly Ethiopian names also occur. In the absence of evidence that Ge'ez is derived from (rather than otherwise related to) Sabaean or some other Ancient South Arabian dialect, an equally good explanation for all the epigraphic phenomena which have been thought to show the occurrence of migrations is that Semitic Ethiopian people, speakers of Ge'ez, adopted the imported writing practice and used it along with certain adaptation and borrowed vocabulary until they developed their own alphabetical style by the fourth to fifth centuries A. D.

Drawes' interpretations of the inscriptional evidence reinforce the possibility that there had been much earlier migrations from an older Semitic speaking area across the Red Sea, and suggest even reconsideration of the hypothesis considered and dismissed in Barton (1902), that the Ethiopian Semites might represent „the unmoved remnant of the primitive Semitic stock”. The question is whether the people whose separation from the Hamito-Semitic (Afro-Asiatic) parent stock (almost certainly somewhere in North-east Africa) led to the development of the Semitic branch settled first in Ethiopia, or whether this separation was followed by settlement in South Arabia and subsequent separation, though more than three thousand years ago, of a sub-group in migrations into Ethiopia. There may be no significant difference between these two possibilities in terms of the linguistic evidence which could distinguish them. It will be recalled that Barton dismissed the first possibility for three reasons: (i) that Ethiopian geography is not such as to permit the isolation of Ethiopian Semitic languages which would lead to their presentday character; (ii) the Ethiopian Semitic languages are today bordered in the north, south, and south-west by another language group, Cushitic, indicating that the Semites are here „intruders”; and (iii) the ancient Aksumite

civilization is South Arabian in character. Barton, of course, was writing in 1902, some twenty-five years before the full knowledge of the epigraphic evidence the interpretation of which led to the acceptance of the migrations hypothesis disputed by Drewes.

We can take Barton's conclusions not as necessarily authoritative ones, but as representative of the notions which were held up to his time, and illustrative of the lack of knowledge about Ethiopia and the Ethiopian language situation which influenced thinking in the period during which first attempts were made to reconstruct Semitic linguistic history¹⁰. The first of Barton's three arguments obviously cannot hold up. The rough and almost impassable nature of Ethiopian geography is today well known, being frequently cited as a major reason for Ethiopia's having avoided colonization. Barton's conception of Ethiopian geography, it develops, was based on knowledge of the agricultural high plateau. He says (1902: 138) that „Abyssinia consists for the most part of a high tableland on which crops are easily grown”.

Nor can the fact that another language group partially surrounds Ethiopian Semitic in the present day be a very strong argument, any more than the similar situation proves that Basque, for example, is an intrusion in Spain. In fact, the envelopment of Ethiopian Semitic by Cushitic languages is rather more complete than Barton was aware. To be exact, Beja, one of the major divisions in the Cushitic family, bounds Ethiopian Semitic on the north; Agaw, another major division, is enveloped in pockets in north-central Ethiopia; the large and diverse Eastern Cushitic sub-family lies to the east and south; and the Western Cushitic or Omotic (Fleming 1969) group closes the ring on the west. It would constitute important evidence of Semitic's secondary presence here if the degree of divergence between the various neighboring Cushitic groups was relatable to separation caused by the supposed Semitic intrusion. But this is not the case, as the

¹⁰ Thought it is typically influenced by now obsolete notions of race and other mistaken assumptions, such as that „Hamitic” languages (Berber, Chadic, Cushitic and Egyptian) constitute a unity opposite Semitic, Barton (1934) seems a full and fair summary of nineteenth-century attempts to determine the Semitic homeland. With regard to the present issue, Barton (1934) is consistent with Barton (1902).

separation among the different Cushitic groups (as of course between Cushitic and Omotic) is of an order considerably greater than this would explain. The degree of divergence evident within Eastern Cushitic alone (say, between Somali and Konso) is greater than any in all of Semitic, Asian and Ethiopian. The third argument, that the Aksumite civilization was South Arabian in character, must be given more attention.

G. W. Van Beek, a specialist in South Arabian archaeology, has enumerated the supposed evidence of the infusion of South Arabian material culture in Ethiopia. Van Beek (1967: 144—145), having noted the existence of South Arabian inscriptions in northern Ethiopia, and having accepted the standard conclusion from these that „by the seventh century B. C. South Arabian culture was firmly implanted in Ethiopia” says that „for the next several centuries many aspects of the material culture of Ethiopia and southern Arabia are virtually identical”. Besides writing, the identical aspects exemplified are: (i) „a limestone statue of a seated woman wearing a robe decorated with highly stylized rosettes” found at Maqele which „probably belongs to the late 7th or 6th century B. C. [and] would be equally at home in southern Arabia”; (ii) „a large number of similar incense burners from both regions dating from about the middle of the first millennium B. C., to about the first century A. D.”; (iii) „a curious architectural member which was perhaps used to border doorways and windows, and which is common to both regions...; examples of this member abound in South Arabia, appearing in pre-Islamic sites in Hadhramaut, Wadi Beihan, and Yeman, as well as in Ethiopia near Enda Cergas”. What we note in this evidence that the „material culture of Ethiopia and southern Arabia were virtually identical” in the period after 700 B. C. is that in no way is it indicative of a *direction* of transfer of the shared features. For none of the items except writing does Van Beek claim that the item is dated earlier in South Arabia than in Ethiopia. Concerning ceramic traditions, he says these „appear to have diverged considerably, based on the rather limited material recovered to date... These forms seem to indicate not a common ceramic culture, but trade between the two regions”.

Ullendorff (1955: 5) has given similar such evidence in support

of his statement that it was the ca. 500 B. C. migrations which led to the first Semitic footholds in Ethiopia. Besides the comment that the „South Arabians introduced... a vastly superior civilization, both material and cultural into Africa”, Ullendorff offers as evidence the inscriptions, and South Arabian place-names on the Red Sea western coastal region, and says that South Arabian origin is „prominently present in the historical consciousness of Ethiopians”.

Again, the place-names and the inscriptions are not evidence against earlier migrations, or even presence of 'original' Semites in Ethiopia, but, following Drewes, merely indicate that visits, or even some settlement but not necessarily colonization by South Arabians in North Ethiopia did take place around 500 B. C.¹¹ In support of the assertion that Arabian origin is „prominent in the historical consciousness of Ethiopians” Ullendorff cites Alaqa Tayye. Even if such awareness of South Arabian origin existed it is doubtful that this would be particularly conclusive. I. M. Lewis has recorded a similar tradition of Arabian origin among the Somali, whom Herbert Lewis (1966: 42) concluded originate in the South-eastern highland of Ethiopia. I. M. Lewis (1961: 11) said that Somali genealogies invariably „go back to Arabian origins, to the Prophet's lineage”. Eike Haberland's (1964: 6) reports of claims made by many Ethiopian Cushitic groups of „Solomonid or at least Tigre or Amhara” descent also show the thorough unreliability of such traditions. (Cf. also Murdock 1959: 43).

As for an infusion of superior South Arabian culture leading

¹¹ The similar place-names in northern Ethiopia and South Arabia deserve new, careful study. If Semitic Ethiopia predates Semitic South Arabia, one would expect similar names in the two regions. Instead of the traditional interpretation, that the Ethiopian names are derived from the South Arabian, the opposite would be suggested. Such names might also derive from the period of Ethiopian hegemony in South Arabia (third century A. D.). Of the eight pairs of place names enumerated by Conti Rossini (1928: 103) for only three is there suggestion of the direction of an original/derived relationship: Eth. Sahart, S. Ar. Sahartan; Eth. Madarà, S. Ar. Madaràn; Eth. Sarawe, S. Ar. Sarwàn. The South Arabian names appear to have a suffix -(a)n added to the Ethiopian name. The more reasonable hypothesis would make the suffixed nama secondary, cf. York/New York, Orleans/New Orleans.

to the Aksumite civilization, much recent scholarship has questioned this. Building and agricultural practices, cattle-keeping, socio-political organization, and writing have been named as the superior cultural element introduced into Aksumite Ethiopia by South Arabians. Arguments have arisen that all of these except writing may now be considered native to Ethiopia, or to North-east Africa. As for writing, it is notable that the early inscriptions of South Arabia, of possibly the eighth but perhaps as late as the fifth century B. C., are not significantly earlier, if at all, than the earliest Ethiopian inscriptions (Beeston 1962: 2) ¹².

L. P. Kirwan, in 1969 lectures at Haile Sellassie I University, discussed the likelihood that Aksumite building practice and architecture were related to those of the Nubian kingdom of Meroë (from ca. 600 B. C.), with which Aksum is believed likely to have had regular trade contacts (Conti Rossini 1928: 106—8, 126). Haberland (1965) has concluded from his research that Aksumite political institutions owed nothing to Meroë; but he also discounts much South Arabian influence, and emphasizes the fundamentally African nature of highland Ethiopian society:

If one compares Amhara peasant culture with that of the Agaw or with that of the Wolamo and Sidamo in the South, one finds few distinctions not traceable to later Christian oriental superstructure. African in its basic character is also kingship in Highland Ethiopia, despite all later alien influence; South Arabian influence, by the way, were quite weak, and did not leave more than vestiges on the Aksumite enthronisation ritual ¹³.

As for agriculture, an article by Christopher Wrigley (1970: 60) began by noting that „there is a consensus ... among archaeolo-

¹² An interesting desideratum is an explanation of the fact that the ancient writing of South Arabia is only evidenced in inscriptions „of a severely practical character: legal enactments, funerary monuments, building records, ex votos and so forth” (Beeston 1962: 2). No manuscripts are known, and the inscriptions are of a sort which is „decidedly monumental”, and „reveal a strong tendency to symmetry and decorative beauty”. (Hans Jensen 1969: 342) The advent of writing is approximately contemporary in South Arabia and Ethiopia, and only in Ethiopia does it persist, and show signs of real vitality.

¹³ Haberland (1965: 318), from the English abstract. He considers the institution of African kingship to derive originally from South Arabia, though in an obscure time before the presumed migrations.

gists ... that the agriculture of tropical Africa derives from the example of the Middle East but also that in this part of the world Middle Eastern influence was feeble and belated." Wrigley (1970: 66—70) reaches the conclusion that „it is even conceivable that in a limited sense, the agriculture of tropical Africa is original and that of the Middle East derivative." He believes that cattle-keeping might well have been associated originally with African agriculture. Further, „it is in the region of the eastern Sudan and western Ethiopia that the birthplace of most African crop plants is probably to be sought." (1970: 62).

Christopher Ehret (1967: 3) basing his argument on lexical evidence in Cushitic languages, concluded that „cattle must have been in East Africa at least as early as the Southern Cushitic languages were spoken there." On the basis of advanced agriculture in northern Ethiopia prior to the hypothesized immigration, George Murdock (1959: 182) considered the Agaw to be „one of the most creative peoples on the entire continent". Frederick Simoons (1965: 11—13) considers it likely from his research that „the Cushites of Ethiopia had knowledge of [wheat and barley] long before 1000 B. C." Tef, the characteristic cereal of Ethiopia, is unknown in South Arabia. Distribution of wheat varieties in Ethiopia suggests that only one of these, that which is localized in the north and about Aksum, Harar and Addis Ababa, was peculiar to the Semites. As for the plough, Cushitic and Semitic Ethiopia share a characteristic type. Simoons (1965: 12) was struck by the fact that „in the south, however, there are also two strange ploughs, one of which has been likened by G. W. N. Huntingford to a plough of New Kingdom Egypt ... It is remarkable that such variation should occur in the south — where the plough is assumed to be recent and where it is less important — rather than in the north." In short, it is not at all clear that Ethiopian agriculture developed originally from a South Arabian model.

Excavations in northern Ethiopia, beginning especially with those at Haoulti in 1959 (Contenson 1963), have increasingly led to an understanding of the distinctness of the ancient Ethiopian material culture from that of South Arabia. The interpretation by J. Pirenne (1967: 103) of the discoveries at Haoulti was that

these are „sans parallèle dans l'art sabéen d'Arabie du Sud auquel on prétendait jusqu'alors rattacher l'art antique du Tigré éthiopien". Francis Anfray's (1968: 353) position was that, if there were migrations, there was no simple imposition of culture: „Vers le milieu du millénaire antérieur à notre ère, les Sudarabiques sont venus brocher sur une population qui a réagi activement à cette infiltration et progressivement imposé certains caractères particuliers aux productions matérielles". Jean Leclant (1970: 30) has been even more emphatic of the native Ethiopian basis of the Aksumite Empire:

In the past it was thought that groups of the Sabeian population from the other side of the Red Sea, having a dominant Semitic culture, invaded [Ethiopia] and subjugated the local Cushitic tribes. However, the conclusions reached from the last fifteen years of archaeological activity are rather different. The early Ethiopian culture is certainly closely related to the South Arabian, but it existed in its own right in full vigor, not as a pale imitation, and, just as there are similarities on both sides of the Red Sea, so there are divergences and differences. The present state of knowledge from excavations forbids us to think of the oldest Ethiopian culture as a colonial off-shoot of that of South Arabia, and nowadays we prefer to call this period of Ethiopian history „Sabeo-Ethiopian" in preference to „South Arabian".

The notion that a particular tribe of South Arabians known as 'Habashat' migrated to Ethiopia, giving their name to the region (as Abyssinia), has been disproved by A. K. Irvine (1965). He found that there was no evidence for the existence of such a tribe. The point of all this, I emphasize, is not to argue that either Ethiopian Semites or Cushites in the first millennium B. C. had an advanced material and agricultural society, nor that one or the other of these two groups was the principal contributor to the Aksumite kingdom. The purpose is just to show that basing the theory of original ca. 700 B. C. or earlier presence of Semites in Ethiopia on the South Arabian cultural basis of Aksumite civilization is certainly now to be questioned, considering late work in history and archaeology¹⁴.

¹⁴ Sergew (1972: 25) has noted that in an inscription of the Pharaoh Thutmose (1501 — 1447 B. C.), a record of trade with 'Punt', are found possible equivalents of Semitic Ethiopian place names: Adulis, Hamasien, Tigre. If this connection of names is right, it constitutes

There remains consideration of the Gurage, and the historical explanation of this diverse language group in central Ethiopia in the light of possible new conclusions about language classification. It is clear by now that the story of their being descendants of arrivals from Tigre in a time as late as the fourteenth century has never been anything but a hypothesis, based on little evidence, for explaining an otherwise problematic linguistic situation. Put forward seriously first by Alaqa Tayye and Conti Rossini, it has in general been uncritically accepted by subsequent authors. George Savard (1961: 220), perhaps noting the contradictions inherent in the theory, wrote that „it is more likely ... that the origin of the Gurages and the Harari could be traced back to a minor invasion from South Arabia during the Aksumite period, perhaps between the fifth and seventh centuries A. D.” But Savard put this comment in a footnote, leaving the fourteenth-century military colony idea in the body of his article.

In addition to the linguistic work of Hetzron, Murtonen Fleming, and Bender, to refute the Tigrean colony idea one should note the unique, non-northern nature of new better-known Gurage society. Ullendorff (1955: 26) referred to the Gurage people as „overwhelmingly pagan”, in spite of the fact that the Tigrean soldier-ancestors would most certainly have been at least largely Christian. Of the twelve Gurage groups listed by William Shack (1966: 36), only four does he consider to be primarily Christian. There is no indication that present-day Orthodox Christianity among the Gurage is anything but an at most 3000-year-old introduction, and much of Gurage Christianity is much more recent Catholicism. Francisco Alvarez (1881: 16) visited the northern fringe of the Gurage region in 1520–1527 and observed that the Gurage were pagans.

Shack (1966: 100–105) does not report a Gurage oral tradition

good evidence of the existence of Semites in Ethiopia at that early time, for, while it might be argued on the basis of South Arabian/northern Ethiopian cognate place names that the supposed Semitic migrants replaced native-Ethiopian names with Semitic names, the possibility would be unlikely that these modern names have survived in northern Ethiopia from pre-Semitic, Cushitic times, having resisted replacement by Semitic terms.

of ancestry in northern Ethiopia. Indeed, the most prominent Chaha tradition which he reports is of origin in Hadiyya, Southwest of the Gurage region. Professor Leslau has told me that it is his experience that young Gurage often claim that their ancestors were Tigreans, and they may even believe that their own language is a dialect of Tigrinya, though this can be easily disproven to their satisfaction. In this regard, it is perhaps interesting to note the Soddo people's tradition of their origin, as reported by Hailu Fulass (in Leslau 1969b: 39–43). This tradition is quite the same as that given by Alaqa Tayye (1927), even to the name of the leader of the Tigrean soldier-ancestors: Azmach Sabat. Hailu's account makes it clear that he himself is doubtful of the authenticity of the tradition. In fact, we can infer that Alaqa Tayye was not quite confident of the tale either, because he offered as explanation for the name 'Gurage' not only the story of Azmach Sabat of Gur'a, but also the completely unlikely idea that when the army from the North stopped in the area, the group of Azmach Sabat camped on the left (Amharic *qəra*) of the king; then in time *qəra-ge* (-ge Amharic 'side') became *gurage* (1927: 59)¹⁵. Finally, it is likely that if the Gurage's fourteenth-century ancestors were Tigreans, such an origin would have been fresh at the time of Alvarez's early sixteenth century visit, and he would have reported it.

It might be asked why, if there is a contradiction between the nature of present-day Gurage culture and society and the prevalent theory of their origin, Shack did not notice this in the course of his field-work. The following quote (1966: 12) shows that even though he clearly noted the contradiction, he just did not consider any alternative to the standard hypothesis of their origin.

... the trend of change has been away from the northern highland pattern... in the system of naming, land tenure, and inheritance, and the development of agnatic descent groups and clan structures, features of social organization which are not found among the Tigre... The Gurage today, apart from their

¹⁵ For another fanciful account in which 'Gurage' is explained as based on the word for 'left', and the counter-argument, see Hetzron (1972: 128).

Semitic language, cannot be distinguished readily in other social and cultural features from the Sidamo, the people their ancestors set out to colonize five centuries ago.

The fundamental paganism of Gurage society, and the distinction of Gurage religion from that of neighbouring Cushitic groups are together an argument that, if the Gurage are descended from Northern Ethiopian Semites, their separation cannot be long after the fourth-century rise of Ethiopian Christianity. The nature of Gurage culture, which is characteristic of non-Semitic south-west Ethiopia and distinguished from that of Tigre, constitutes a strong argument against popular versions of their origin which have little in their favor except a desire to explain some Gurage-northern Ethiopian linguistic similarities, and the tenuous argument of the Gur'a place name in the north. And the common theory leaves many questions unanswered: how the remarkable Gurage society developed, with its elaborate religious traditions and clan structure; how a Tigrean culture and religion could have been so utterly lost and yet the Semitic language retained; why language should be retained to the exclusion of all other cultural characteristics; and what could have led to the great diversity of Gurage languages today, all in less than seven hundred years. Similar questions remain in a consideration of the prehistory of the Semitic people of Harar, of a similar theory is offered to account for them ¹⁶.

Anyway, there is yet another, similar theory concerning the Gurage, one which is quite as implausible as that discussed above. The tradition reported by Esteves Pereira (1900: 302—303),

¹⁶ Getachew Haile has pointed out to me that while Gurage and Tigrinya are completely mutually non-intelligible, the written Amharic of the fifteenth century is largely understandable to a speaker of Amharic today.

The *-ge* suffix of Hararge, Gurage and a few other place names might mean 'country of', but doubtfully 'people of' as suggested by Ullendorff (1955: 228). I. Guidi (1901), the source given by Ullendorff for *-ge* 'people of, country of', gives a meaning 'stirpe' ('issue, descendant') which suggests the 'people of' idea, but no examples. Guidi simply refers to examples in Pereira (1900). Pereira's examples, from the Chronicles of Susenyos, do not support the meaning 'people of'.

translator of the Chronicles of Susenyos, is that they are „descended from Abyssinians who took refuge in their country at the time of [the invasion by] Ahmed ben Ibrahim,” the ubiquitous Mohammed Grañ (ca. 1540). Pereira, more interestingly and actually in complete contradiction of the Grañ theory and as well the more popular fourteenth century military colony idea, noted that the first mention of the Gurage in the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles is in the Chronicle of Amda Seyon, according to which, at the time of this king's attempts to bring the southern regions into the Empire, they go to war *against* him, in 1329. This mention in the Royal Chronicle, which shows that the Gurage people were identifiable by that name in the early fourteenth century, argues conclusively against either theory of their northern Ethiopian origin ¹⁷. (For the Chronicles of Amda Seyon see also G. B. Huntingford 1965).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Classification of the Ethiopian Semitic languages and reconstruction of the prehistory of Ethiopia have at times relied on each other. This is in any case inevitable, and to a degree proper. Certainly the development of a theory of prehistory is bound to take as one of its major arguments the evidence of language classification. The Ethiopian language situation is diverse and problematic, and the linguist attempting classification will probably also be happy to take his support wherever he can find it. But except for occasional non-linguistic hypotheses necessary to narrow the infinite data of languages to manageable proportions, the work of language classification is carried on independently, and only turns to the evidence of prehistory for verification and secondary support. Still, a theory of language classification should not be in conflict with an associated theory of prehistory, and neither one should advance very far without some attempt to resolve the conflicts which arise between them.

¹⁷ I do not enumerate examples from the Chronicle. These are numerous and unambiguous, and those interested may find these easily by reference to the index in Pereira (1900).

We have seen how theories of late prehistory and language classification of Ethiopian Semitic have developed, and how a recent series of developments in language classification leads to conflicts which are resolvable through revision of some prevalent ideas about Ethiopian prehistory. With this revision language classification and prehistory can now be harmonized with interesting consequences, since the revised theory offers a basis for understanding five aspects of the problem which have been less well integrated in the traditional theoretical framework, in which the Semitic groups of Ethiopia are seen to derive from Semitic South Arabian migrations some 2500 years ago.

(i) Given the acceptance of the underlying theory of the original arrival of Semitic peoples in Cushitic Ethiopia in the first millennium B. C., the mistaken acceptance of the idea of recent Gurage Tigrean origin can be understood. With allowance of the possibility of much more ancient, or even original Semitic peoples in North-east Africa, the 'problem' of finding the origin of these Semitic groups in central Ethiopia is eliminated. Similarly, the theory of the colonization of Ethiopia by Asian Semites was more acceptable, or even necessary in a time before the Semitic languages were fully seen in the wider perspective of their position within the Hamito-Semitic family of languages, five of whose sub-families are found only on the African continent. The sixth — Semitic — extends from Ethiopia into Asia Minor. Three — Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic — are found in Ethiopia.

Naturally, at the turn of the century, and even until recent times, Asian Semitic languages — Hebrew and Aramaic for their religious importance and literary traditions, Arabic for similar reasons, plus its great geographical-political significance, Akkadian for its ancient literature and history, and all of these because of the accident of Western historical perspective — have deserved the primary interest of scholars, and it is not strange that they should have been given primary theoretical importance¹⁸. The

¹⁸ Leslau, in reviews of works involving reconstruction of proto-Semitic, has often criticised them for failure to adequately consider Ethiopian Semitic evidence, or for considering of these languages, only Ge'ez. The over-attention paid the traditionally important languages is admitted by Moscati at al (1964: 132). Hetzron (1969b:

modern geographical distribution of the Hamito-Semitic languages, however, suggests a Northeast African origin for the family, and Ethiopia would be the natural focus of the extension of the Semitic branch from such a center of origin. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, of which it seems that none exists, serious and objective consideration should be given to this possibility.

(ii) The diversity of Ethiopian Semitic, in number of languages, and in the degree of difference existing among them, becomes less extraordinary with this possibility admitted. It is no longer necessary to construct unlikely arguments to derive all of them, from Chaha to Tigre, from Ge'ez, or even pre-Ge'ez. Indeed, such linguistic diversity would be commonly expected in a region of extremely ancient differentiation of a language group. The likelihood that some of the modern languages have been spoken for as long as we know Ge'ez to have been spoken, the probability that the division into North and South Ethiopian is genetically proper, and the knowledge today of the at least three-way branching in the 'Gurage' group alone, all encourage us to push back the time when a single Semitic language was first spoken in Ethiopia.

(iii) The much discussed extraordinary influence of the Cushitic language on Ethiopian Semitic, not limited to the typical cases of linguistic borrowing — phonology and vocabulary associated with adopted technology and institutions — apparently crops up even in Ethiopian Semitic syntax and morphology; this becomes much less extraordinary when it is considered that the two related groups may have been in intimate contact for at least a thousand years longer than previously imagined. If, in fact, North-east Africa is the area of original Semitic split-off from the Hamito-Semitic language community, features shared with the Cushitic sister-group, rather than desiring item by item explanation in terms of borrowing, might reasonably be commonplace. Contact early re-established with Cushitic would serve to encourage the

sa) says that *Hebrew and Arabic being the best known Semitic languages, the reconstruction of proto-Semitic was based on them to too great an extent, and phenomena found in other Semitic languages were considered as deviations or as secondary developments.*

maintenance in Ethiopian Semitic of linguistic features shared between Proto-Cushitic and Proto-Semitic mutually retained from an Hamito-Semitic parent language. Besides, contact before 1000 B. C. would perhaps have been contact during a period in which not Semitic, but Cushitic peoples were in political and cultural ascendancy. Such a situation would make linguistic borrowing from Cushitic into Semitic more likely.

What does require explanation is the fundamental contradiction which arises in consideration of, first, the great heterogeneity of Ethiopian Semitic (over twelve distinct languages, all but three in central Ethiopia), and second, the numerous Cushitic-like features thought to be borrowings from Cushitic languages encountered by the ancient Semitic peoples in their spread south. There is a contradiction since intense contact with an originally present Cushitic population, which might explain the borrowings within the time limits of the prevalent theory, would normally be presumed to have also encouraged close settlement and at least close communication between Semitic groups. This should then have led to a great deal more homogeneity among the modern languages — in particular among the Gurage group, where land area is least, and the pressure from Cushitic as evidenced, apparently, by culture borrowing seemingly greatest.

(iv) If the date of the Ethiopian split-off from the rest of Semitic (or vice versa) can be pushed back a thousand or more years, it would be more reasonable that, as seems to be the case, Ethiopian Semitic should not uncommonly share lexical roots with Northern to the exclusion of Southern Semitic (cf. Leslau 1969a: passim) and thus should even be, as shown by Ullendorff (1968: 130) „in a position to make a notable contribution to the elucidation of the Hebrew vocabulary”. Related to this is the ability of Ethiopian Semitic, and in particular Southern Ethiopian Semitic, to enable reconstruction of elements of the Proto-Semitic language no longer so apparent in other branches of Semitic. Here we may cite the recently described cases of Proto-Semitic main-verb marks in Soddo and other Gurage languages (Leslau 1967; Hetzron 1968), archaic vowel composition of the jussive verb in Southern Ethiopian languages (Leslau 1968a), and possible reflex of Proto-Semitic stress in Ge'ez (Hetzron 1969b). There are also

the long discussed (since Haupt 1878) similarities between Ethiopian Semitic and Akkadian, which have suggested to some linguists a closer genetic relationship between these two groups than the generally assumed branching in Semitic would permit. If the separation between Ethiopian and an ancient Arabian Semitic group was in a time close after the separation of Akkadian, it would be more reasonable to find Northern and Proto-Semitic features in Ethiopian Semitic languages.

(v) There is, finally, the considerable cultural homogeneity of Ethiopia, which has intrigued scholars for decades, and which has usually explained as due to 'diffusion', or 'cultural borrowing', both from Semitic to Cushitic Ethiopia, and vice versa. Donald Levine (1971) discusses the extent of this cultural unity across the Semitic-Cushitic (and, we may add, -Omotic) language boundaries of Ethiopia. He mentions Pan-Ethiopian cultural features such as the Zar cult, the neglect of fish as food, erection of phallic stone monuments, and the special significance of the central mainstay pole in the house. This cultural unity is illustrated at length and analysed in Levine (forthcoming). I do not know the extent to which this phenomenon is preceded elsewhere, and adequately explained as due to cultural borrowing. It is, however, better explained as the date of contact between the Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic groups is pushed back. It is still better explained when, like the Cushitic linguistic features in Ethiopian Semitic, we consider that the shared features of culture might be Hamito-Semitic features which are retained in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic in the region of first separation of the two groups, retention reinforced by continued contact since not long after that distant but more and more accessible time.

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L'EXPLOITATION ET LE COMMERCE DE L'OR EN AFRIQUE DE L'EST ET EN CELLE DU SUD-EST AU MOYEN ÂGE D'APRÈS LES SOURCES ARABES

Parmi les produits exportés au Moyen Age de l'Afrique au Sud du Sahara par les commerçants étrangers, c'est surtout, à côté des esclaves noirs, l'or qui mérite une mention toute spéciale. Les sources arabes de cette époque, plus précisément du VIII^e à XV^e siècle, contiennent maintes données sur les mines d'or en Afrique subsaharienne, sur leur exploitation, ainsi que sur le commerce de l'or dans cette partie de l'Afrique. Ces données concernent d'un côté l'Afrique de l'Ouest, à savoir les territoires correspondants aux pays actuels du Mali, de la Guinée et de la Nigeria, et de l'autre — l'Afrique de l'Est et du Sud-Est, à savoir le Sudan, l'Éthiopie, l'Ouganda, le Kenya, la Tanzanie, le Mozambique, la Rhodésie et la République Sud-Africaine. Les informations tirées des sources arabes médiévales, traitant des gisements de l'or en Afrique de l'Ouest et de l'exploitation et du commerce de l'or provenant de ces gisements, ont été déjà étudiées d'une façon suffisante par plusieurs savants. Je pense surtout aux deux livres de E. Bovill: *Caravans of the Old Sahara* (1933) et *The Golden Trade of the Moors* (1958), consacrées entièrement à ce problème, ainsi qu'à l'ouvrage de Raymond Mauny intitulé *Tableau géographique de l'Ouest africain au moyen âge* (1961), où on trouve un ample chapitre traitant de l'or en Afrique de l'Ouest. Quant aux données contenues dans les sources arabes médiévales, concernant l'or en Afrique de l'Est et en celle du Sud-Est, elles ont été beaucoup moins utilisées par les savants qui s'intéressaient à l'histoire et à l'économie moyenâgeuse de l'Afrique. Le but du présent article est de combler cette lacune et de donner le bilan de l'apport des auteurs arabes médiévaux en ce qui concerne le problème de l'or en Afrique Orientale et celle du Sud-Est.