

IM38habbaba (39:10)

D = Danna, H = Habbaaba

38.1 Hajje Habbaba's biography and her account of her life as a cattle nomad, 0-7:29

38.2 Habbaba talks about differences between Kanuri and Arab traditions and describes how a typical wedding was in the nomadic camps she lived in, 24:59 - 34:37

<I> isimki miné

'What's your name?'

<H> ana, ismí habbaaba,

'Me, my name's Hababa.'

<I> wildooki ween

'Where were you born?'

'wuldooni, fi jeéré híne, mawlooda da fi jeeree maani fi maiduguri, fi jeere, ajjeere hini, barragna¹ barra, aniina arab barra,

'I was born here in Jeré. I was born in Jeré, not in Maiduguri. Here in Jeré. We moved outside. We are Arabs from outside.'²

<I> ween jeere

'Where is Jeré?'

<H> ajjeeree, hine mahal, qaadi minn al, qaadi min maiduguri híne barra híne bas, (0:43)

'Jeré, is here, not from Maiduguri in that direction, just a little outside.' (0:43)

<I> baʔiid walla

'far?'

<H> la jam gongolon hini bas, ma baiid,

'No, near to Gongolong here, not far.'

<I> fi l hille

'In the village?'

<H> fi l hille, hay, laa fi l hille awwal aniina fi l hille, wa dugut, maragna fi doora, axayaani barra bisiiru fi d door, yowaa, aniina jiina gaʔadna fi maiduguri híne

'In the village, yes. Actually at first we were in the village, then we moved to its cattle camp. My siblings outside move nomadically. Okay, then we came and stayed in Maiduguri here.'

nafarikki šunu

¹ = *marragna*

² Outside of Maiduguri could be interpreted as being from a farming or a nomadic background.

‘What is your clan?’

<H> ana nafarii, hana himeediye (1:04)

‘My clan is Himeedi.’ (1.04)

<I> ammki be abuuki

Your father and mother?’

<H> aṃṃwí aḃuuy kula himeed, aye, walaad himeed kulu arab, ha aniina kuḷḷu aṣṣa baḡgaara baṣṣa

‘My mother and father are both Himeedi, yes. Wulaad Himeed are Arabs and we are nomadic Arabs.’

mata jiiti le maiduguri

‘When did you come to Maiduguri?’

<H> jiit le maiduguri, jiit alyoom md’awwile, laakin awwal gaʔatta fi, fi baama, be raajilí fi baama wa raajilí maat, wa jiit híne fi maiduguri, kádar jiit híne, indí ṭamaane sana, gaaʔide hine, laakin awwal beetna da min zamaan kula gaayid fi (1:37)

‘I came to Maiduguri, I’ve spent a long time. But first I stayed in Bama, with my husband in Bama and he died, then I came to Maiduguri and since I came here it’s been eight years that I’m staying here, but in a house we’ve had for a long time.’ (1:37)

<I> yaani gabul d’amaane siniin

‘So eight years ago.’

<H> ayee jiit be dahaaba ṭamaane siniin bas, laakin gábuḷ, baṣṣa ana, ana saayre baṣṣa fi door, maʔá bágaṣ, baṣṣa, wa jiit axád raajil fi baama, min baama, raajilí tawaffa, maat, wa jiit hine alyoom indí ṭamaane sana, gaade hine

‘Yes, it’s just been eight years, but before, in the wilderness, I moved nomadically in the camp, with the cattle. Then I came and married a man in Bama, and from there my husband passed away, he died, and I came here eight years ago and I’m staying here.’

balaa al luqa al arabiyye

‘Besides Arabic, what language do you speak?’

<H> ana, luqqa ille da arabiya wo kalaam borno baṣṣ gade ma baarif, kalaam hawsa kula ma baarfa, ille kalaam borno, ma baarif kalaam luqqa taani (2:10)

‘Me, language just Arabic and Kanuri. I don’t know any other. Even Hausa I don’t know. Just Kanuri. I don’t know any other language.’ (2:10)

keef alallamti luqqat borno

‘And how did you learn Kanuri?’

<H> luqqat borno, raajilí baṣṣaay, wa daṣaayrí, al hariim al maayí fi l beet, an

nuswaan daṣaayrí fi l beet, humma taḷaata ana aṣṣa foog raajil waahid axadná, wa humma kulu borno, ana kula bahajji be kalaam borno ke da allamt al borno (2:27)

‘Kanuri. My husband was Kanuri, and my co-wives, the other women in the house, the women my co-wives in the house. They were three and I was the fourth with one

husband whom we married, and they were all Kanuri, so I as well spoke Kanuri and that's how I learned it.'³ (2:27)

ma nisiiti kalaam arab

'You didn't forget Arabic?'

<H> ma nisiita⁴ kalaam arab, ma nisiita hana juduudí, ammwí arabiya aḅuyí arabi, wa luqit al arab ma bansaaha, aarifeeha kulu kulu (2:37)

'I didn't. I didn't forget my ancestral language. My mother and father were Arabs so I won't forget Arabic. I know it thoroughly.' (2.37)

našaqtí be l bagar (2:37)

'Did you herd nomadically?'

<H> našáq be bagara aye, nemši fi l yaare, wa náji fi gubio, gubio da, taʔarfa,

'Yes, I did. We'd go to Yare and then come back to Gubio.⁵ Do you know Gubio?'

<D> šaafa fi l kitaab

'He knows it from books.'

<H> aaye, šifta fi l kitaab, yowwa suřna nemši namši fi l yaare hinaak bařra, fi faransa, wa náji hine maqiib hinaak suuk iguul laha gubió, namši naxarrif fiiya, wa narudd, naji našaati fi diikwa, min diikwa nemši al yaare, min al yaare narud namši gubio, keda lagaayid, umrí, ana daxalooni, indí sitte sabʔa siniin, saayre fi l bagar, minn al bagar jiit mašeet gaʔatta⁶ fi baama, wa min baama jiit gaʔatta fi maiduguri hine, (3:21)

'Okay, from books. So we would move going to Yare, in Cameroon (Faransa) and come back here in the west to any area whose market is Gubio. We'd go and spend the rainy season there then return and spend the dry season in Dikwa, and from Dikwa go on to Yare, then from Yare return back to Gubio. And it was like that until I reached an age that they married me.⁷ I was six or seven years herding with the cattle. Then from the cattle I switched and went to Bama to live and from Bama came and stayed here in Maiduguri.' (3.21)

<I> šunu aš šaʔab fi l minšaaq

'What is difficult about herding nomadically?'

<H> saʔab fi l minšaax, ille nasiir, wa nafartil, wa nibəni beet, hana buruuš buruuš zey da ke, wa nibniihin, wa nifartilhin, wa bukuřa nasiir, našiiil foog at tawwaar, wa

³ Note that she did not learn Kanuri from Jeré where she was born.

⁴ The form theoretically can be parsed: *nas-iit-a*, with *-a* a 3MSG object suffix. However, the clause has a direct object, and it is unusual in the extreme to use a cataphoric pronoun referencing the direct object in Nigerian Arabic. The speaker has a number of tokens where she has a final *-a* after a 1SG subject.

Final *-a* after the 1SG perfect is reported in Abbeche and Sudanese Arabic (Roth-Laly 1978).

⁵ East-West movement. Yare is in northern Cameroon north of the Waza National Park and is the locus of the dry season settlement. It lies in the Logone-Chari River Basin, and hence usually offers water even in the dry season. Gubio in western Borno is the locus of the wet season (approximately June-September) transhumance. The region is known for its sandy soil which absorbs the rainfall quickly.

⁶ *gaʔat-t-a*, again with the problematic *-a* discussed in n. 2. See also *jiita* at about 5:00 below.

⁷ *Daxal-oo-ni* 'they entered me' = *dass-oo-ni* (see Text IM34), 'they married me, had me enter (a house)'.

aniina nərkaab, wa awlaadna bərkaabo, xalaas, wa rəjaal foog al xeel, kula nasiir, minnasabaa, šaba saa ɬamaane, kan sərna, namma saa tineen fi ɬuhur nenzil, wa naşuud' naakul, wa baʔad aşşabá min aşşabá, nasiir gade kula, ke namma ɬuhur nenzil, xalaas (4:01)

'The difficulty in herding? Nothing but traveling, take down the hut, put it up, a hut from mats. Like that. We'd erect them then take them down, and the day after we'd continue on. We put them on bulls, and we'd ride (on top) and our children would climb up and ride. Like that. And the men on horses. And we'd go. In the morning like eight o'clock, we'd travel up to two o'clock in the afternoon then we'd get down and cook food. Then in the morning we'd continue traveling, like that and in the afternoon get down (and prepare camp).' (4.01)

tasiiru le ween,

'Where would you go?'

<H> nasiir

'We travel.'

<I> keef teerifu ween tasiiru

'How do you know where you are going?'

<H> nasiir, naʔarfa, r rijaal biarifú, kan surna alyoom min hina, zay nasiir min hina šaba, kadar le ganggolo, masaaʔ kadar min hine kadar, al makunuus da al hille da, konduga, kádar ke marhala tabga zey ke da, kadar min hine le mubaa, kula nasiir ke bas, a bukura nəgum, wa baad bukura nanzil, (4:31) xalaas nəsiir ke bas, ma dabbarna minna ke da ana imrii, min sitte siniin fi d door, xalaas abeet ad door, ad toor taʔab ad door taʔab, maɬaʔa taşuɬ foogna, wa yoom ma nalga eeş nargut, angudey,⁸ nişərab leban,⁹ wa naşbir şaba dugo naşuud' naakul, xalaas şifta taʔab, al maʔa saayre fi d door tabga ajuus haadur bas, xalaas abeet ad door, xalaas jiita gaʔatta fi fi l hille, fi baama, xalaas gaadiin fi baama, ille nəruux fi l watiir, fi l moota iwadduuna, wa indina şaqqaliin ke da bas xalaas, gaʔadna fi l hille áhasan (5:07)

'We travel. We know. The men know it. If we left today from here, like it we leave from here, at Ganggolo, a journey from here up to, that crazy¹⁰ town, Konduga. The extent of (a day's) journey would be like that. The distance from here to Muba. And we'd go again. The next day we get up again and pitch camp again (4.31). That's what we would do. We didn't deviate from that. Me, I was in the camp since I was six. Then I had enough. Bulls are tiring. The camps are tiring. It rains on us, and some days we didn't get solid food to eat, hunger with no solid food.¹¹ We'd only drink milk, and remain patient until we could cook solid food. So you see the problem? A woman herding nomadically gets old quickly. So I gave up the camp and came and stayed in the city, in Bama. I stayed there, and only travelled about by car; a car would take us if we had something to do. It's better to stay in the city.' (5.07)

keef tifartil al beet

'How do you disassemble a hut?'

⁸ *Angudéy* 'hungry, esp. from lack of solid food' < ?

⁹ Here *eeş* 'solid food', esp. what is pounded into meal is opposed to milk, which does not fill one up.

¹⁰ *Makənuus* lit. 'the crazy one', an expression used as a filler when something slips one's memory, the 'whachamacallit'

¹¹ *Angudey*, 'hunger from not having solid food'

<H> al beet nəfartila, nərabbiḏ'a zay da šifta, zay da šifta, kula nibəni, wa nəfká be l buruuš, wa nəfká be leeda, al leeda taʔarfa, al leeda al axadar, wa zey hana rooḃa da, nəfka beya xalaas be l buruuš, wa be l fārwa hiil al bágar, idabbuyuu, wa nəfkaaʔa, wa nəfka l buruuš, wa nəfka l leeda min fook, xalaas al alme ma iṣuḃ?, (5:35)

‘A hut, we take it down, we tie it up like this, you see, we erect it and we cover it with grass mats, then we cover it with a plastic sheet, you know plastic sheets?, the dark plastic sheet, like the ones of synthetic plastic, and we cover it with mats and with cowhides that have been cured,¹² and we cover the plastic on top, and then no water leaks in.’ (5:35)

<I> foog al leeda

‘And on the plastic?’

<H> aye buruuš, aye, min tihit lee le l leeda, juluid, hana l bagar da šifta, idabbuyú¹³ kwees, nəfarriša, wa taani nəfrəš al al buruuš, taani nəfuruš al leeda, xalaas alme ma isub, al maḏʔara tadug min aṣṣaba ya ašiye maafi,

‘Mats, underneath the plastic. Skins, of cattle. You see. They spread¹⁴ them out well, then we stretch them out, then we stretch out the mats, then we spread out the plastic and no water gets in. Rain can fall from morning until evening and nothing.’

<I> tihit

‘Underneath?’

<H> tihit nisawwi sariir, niseyi sariir zaʔabb¹⁵ zey da, nulbukkin wa nibini sariir, wa fi sariir hag al háḏʔab, nufurša, xalaas, nufarriš fooga, xalaas nirgut (6:07)

‘Underneath we put a bed, a bed of woven vines like this, we pound them (into the ground) nulbikkin and we erect the bed. And on the wooden bed, we cover it, we spread out on top of it¹⁶ and we sleep.’ (6:07)

qurfa wade

‘one room’

<H> aye, aniina fi beet waahid, w al mara be raajilha, wa zey indak yaal taḷaata aṙəba, kulu turugdu sawa, xalaas, təṣbuhu, wa xalaas tisiiru (6:20)

‘Yes. We’re in one room, the husband and wife and if you have three or four children you all sleep together. Then you wake up and travel the next day.’ (6:20)

intu fi door waahid buyuut kam

‘How many of you are in one camp?’

<H> buyuut katiir šaba buyuut ašara, wa šaba axwaan itneen, induhum hariim tineen, be ummuhum, xalaas buyuut taḷaata, buyuut aṙbaa, kuṙt nanzil keda, wa dool kula

¹² She says they cover the mats with plastic sheets and cowhide, though in the next passage she says the order is skins, mats, plastic on top.

¹³ *dabbay* “put one on top of the other”, also “rub, rub substance into”..

¹⁴ *Dabbaq* can be both ‘tan leather’ and ‘pile in layers’

¹⁵ Bed woven with heavy vines, with four wooden legs.

¹⁶ *Nu-furš-a* ‘we spread out, make a bed’, in the latter meaning not specific as to whether sheets or mats are used to make the bed. Traditionally mats are used as the bed cover.

taani jambina ke, šába buyuut aṛəbaa xamsa, humma kulu inzilu axawaan bas, ma náfar taani ille l uxuwaan, intu axwaan, amku waade, abuu ku waahid, kádar talaata aṛḃaa?, wa be bagarku, wa be raʔʔaaʔiin, raʔʔaaya isəru be l bagar, ijuubuu hin, (6:50)
 ‘A lot of houses, like maybe ten. Maybe two brothers, and they have two wives with their mother, so that’s three or four houses. We all camp like that. And all these are next to each other, like four or five houses. They all make a camp the brothers. There aren’t any other people, only brothers. You the brothers, your mother, your father, up to three or four, and your cattle and with their herdsmen, the herdsmen that herd the cattle and bring them.’ (6:50)

‘All Arabs?’

<H> kulluna arab, xalaas yisəroho yiju, xalaas tibinu buyuutku tinzulu wa tisiiru ke bas, doola jaay, hu dool inzulu hine dool kulu katiiriin xalaas, wa tasboho tasiiru kula marra aḍ ḍaʔan da al bagar deel, taabʔaat deel deel taabʔaat deel kula tasiiru, wa tanzulu (7:07)

‘All of us are Arabs. They herd cattle and come back (to the camp), then you erect your huts and encamp then continue on, these in this direction, and these others encamp here, many, and that start off in the morning and travel on, each time a herd¹⁷ of cattle. These following these and these these ones,¹⁸ and you camp again.’ (7:07)
 ma tasiiru ma gabaayil taaniyaat

‘You don’t travel with other ethnic groups?’

<H> gabaaila taaniya kula fi fallaaata, wa aṛab, kunna nasiiru sawa, kuṛt nasiir jami, fallaaata kula fi, fallaaata taʔarufhum, fiya nafara iguulu fallaaata, how aṛab, xalaas isiiru humma bas,¹⁹ zamaan borno ma isiiru, alyoom bas boṛṇo sowo bagar, gabul boṛṇo ma isiiru ille l aṛab, aye ke da bas (7:29)

‘There are, the Fulani, and Arabs. We travel together. All travel together. There are also Fulani. You know them? There’s an ethnic group called Fulani, and Arabs. They travel together. It used to be that Kanuri did not herd nomadically, but now Kanuri have cattle as well. Before they didn’t, only Arabs. That’s the way it is.’ (7:29)

38.2 Habbaba talks about differences between Kanuri and Arab traditions and describes how a typical wedding was in the nomadic camps she lived in (24:59 - 34:37)

<H> al arab wa boṛṇo, keef ma baadum, al arab wa borno ma gaadiin šaba da al aṛabi, dugut dool jiiraani dool boṛṇo haw ana aṛabiye, ma gaadiin zey da bas, wa nalkallam lehum be boṛṇo, haw humma ma iʔarfu hanaana, iguulu leena be boṛṇo (25:25)

‘(24:59) Arabs and Kanuri, how are they together? Aren’t Arabs and Kanuri just living together, the Kanuri here and the Arabs there? These neighbors of mine are Kanuri and I’m Arab. They just live like that. And we speak to them in Kanuri and they don’t know our (language) and speak to us in Kanuri.’ (25.25)

¹⁷ A *ḍaʔan* is a herd of about 100 cattle (see GR21).

¹⁸ Each brother following his own cattle during the day.

¹⁹ In a number of texts it was stated that Arabs and Fulani would nomadize together. Unfortunately, in none of the texts is there any discussion of how a mixed ethnic encampment functioned.

min aadaathum ke, šik walla cat waahid
 ‘Are their customs different or the same?’

<H> keef,
 ‘What?’

<D> adaat al arab haw be borno šik walla mi šik (25:32)
 ‘Are the Arab customs and Kanuri different or not different?’ (25.32)

<H> haa šik, al aṛaḃi be borno da aadaatum šik,
 ‘Of course different. Arabs and Kanuri, their customs are different.’
 ‘For instance.’
 misilan al arab be borno, axiidittəm šik, haw aaditum kula šik, ma waahid, ha keef
 inta,
 ‘For instance the Arabs and Kanuri, their (way of) marriage is different, not the same,
 and like ...’

<D> biššaabahan sei (25:47)
 ‘Aren’t they similar?’ (25.47)

<H> bəššaabahan kula humma axiiditum šik sey, dugut boṛno,
 ‘Though they resemble one another, their marriage is actually different. Now Kanuri’

<D> wəi
 ‘Ya’

<H> kan,
 ‘If ...’

<D> šaba šaafhūm waafkiin ke da keef naadum biyarif (26:10)
 ‘Like if you see them standing, a person recognizes them’ (26:10)

<H> ad damm al arabi be l boṛnaayi da, dugut jiiit daxál fi beedna hine, ana aṛabiye,
 wa da, nafarta šik la wahada, ma btafunda inta, kan jiiit, ma btafunda inta, ana aṛabiye,
 wa d’aak bornaayi, kan jiiit šikilum ma btaarifa, šikil al arab ma illabbad, šikilhum šik
 šik, ad dam zaata šik, al boṛnaayi, le haalu,²⁰ wa l aṛaḃi le haala, (26:37)
 ‘The Arab and the Kanuri blood, now if you enter our house here, I’m Arab and this
 other one, his person is different from the other. Wouldn’t you distinguish them? The
 appearance of an Arab can’t be hidden. Their appearance is different, and the blood
 itself is different. The Kanuri has his and the Arab his.’ (26.37)
 ‘In their customs how are they different?’

aadaatum da, le axaayíd an nuswaan, borno kan yaad’u banaathum, masalan, išiiifu
 raajil, iguulu ad’deenaak bittina, kan ad’ooaha, ilimmu lehum, sile, katiir, ilimmu
 loohum šuwaalaat, ilummu al waahid inda yaad’i arabiye,²¹ al waahid inda, isowi ay
 šey ilumma le bitta, (27:02) laakin ma yaaxut fuluus ar raajil, kan axat, gursa raajil
 igabbila leya, amma aadidna aniina al arab mi ke, al arab, inta jiiit tidoor bittuhum,
 iguulu leek, jiiib, dahab gadər ke iguul leek jiiib sile gadər ke, simiit, hu taad’a, wa

²⁰ Rare instance of –u for 3MSG possessor pronoun. The speaker uses a number of “easternisms” in her speech, including this.

²¹ Here < šarabiyya, the Egyptian Arabic word for ‘car’.

irehhiuuha leek, ma ma ilimmu leek walla šey, ille hi bas be qallitha be kaareeha, hi iwaddi leek ma ilimmu leek watiir wala ilimmu leek, sile,

‘Regarding their customs, as for marriages to women, if the Kanuri give their daughters, for instance, they see a man, and say, we’ve given you our daughter, and they give her, they collect themselves money, a lot; they accumulate themselves bags (of food), they give a car, if someone has means, he does anything and gathers it for his daughter,²² (27:02), though they don’t take the husband’s money. If he marries, they return the husband’s money to him. However, we Arabs our customs aren’t like that. The Arabs, if you come and ask for their daughter, they’ll tell you, bring gold of such an amount, he’ll say bring so much money. Did you understand? And you give it, and then they’ll bring her to you. But they don’t give you (the man) anything, except only her with her grain and her goods. They give you her but they don’t give you a car or money.’

<D> bidiyo (27:28)

‘Video’ (27:28)

<H> a ma ilimmu le l bidiyo ilimmu le bittuhum, šaba bidiyo, talvizon, raadiyo, da ilimmú, amma ilimmu leeku sile, wa ilimmu leeku arabiyaat da alyoom an naas addaaxalo,

‘They don’t give you the video, they give it to their daughter. Like a video, radio, these things they accumulate (for her). However, they’ll get you money and cars (because) nowadays people have integrated with one another.’

<D> wəi

‘ya’

<H> borno kanaan al arab, min jam ke da ma bisawwú, ma bisawwú, maafi zamaan da, (27:43)

‘Kanuri, I mean Arabs, they don’t do that²³ for no reason. They didn’t used to do it, formerly.’ (27:43)

<D> ha dugut šaba al fəré haw al gaṙango kula sei al arab ma bisowwú

‘And now like the tobacco plant flower and the gorongo fruit, Arabs don’t use them.’

<H> ha ha maa bəṣawwú, al fuṙee wa be l gaṙango kula al arab ma bilimmu sey ma bittəhum ille borṇo da, bišiiłú

‘No they don’t do it, the tobacco plant and the gorongo fruit the Arabs don’t use them on their girls, only the Kanuri do.’

<D> aa le fi sunuunhum šaba al arabiyyaat (27:54)

‘and on their teeth, like the Arab ladies.’ (27:54)

<H> ma bəṣow, ma bicoqqú da al arab ma bicaqqu al gaṙangó ma bicoqqu al fuṙee, ille biyaakulu gooṙo bas,

²² They gather these items and give them to the husband. The Kanuri reality is more complex, but it appears that there is a greater possibility in Kanuri society for the husband to receive from the bride’s family.

²³ I. e. give presents to the groom.

‘They don’t. They don’t rub this on, the Arabs don’t rub the garango on (the teeth), nor the tobacco flower. They only eat kola nuts.’

<D> yawa ha kan hu [...] sei biyaarif al bornaayiyye, tucuqu fərreek
‘So if he eats, [...] he knows that the Kanuri girl rubs on the tobacco plant.’

<H> al bornaaye qašimha ahamar da inta ma tašiif sunuun al araa bornaaye, mi humur, bicuqu garangó fi, lakin al arab ille yaakulu gooro, ow ma, may isowu še taani gade (28:14)
‘The Kanuri lady has a red mouth, don’t you see the teeth of the Kanuri? Isn’t it red? They rub on the garango fruit, but Arabs only eat kola nuts, and don’t do anything else.’ (28:14)

al maal le l bitt walla
‘The money is for the girl, right

<H> aye le l bitt bas ...la hu abu l bit, bəyaad’i le l walad al axad bitta, ilimma leya, humma keda borŋo isawwu ke da,
‘Yes, just for the girl... No the father of the girl gives it to the man who marries his daughter. He collects it for him. Kanuri do like that.’

<D> fišaan maahin jamiilaat bas, (28:40)
‘Because they aren’t beautiful.’

<I> le mine
‘For who?’

<H> le r raajil, ar raajil, ar raajil aljawwazat bit, yiad’ú leya, laakin aniina al arab, gaadiin hurriin, wala indina gad’iye, naad’i maal, wa naad’i dahab, wa naad’i watiir, ma mnaad’ii, nabarrid al bit, wa nəlabbisha, wa naad’iha le raajilha, qarad yakuṛubha (29:02)

‘For the man. The man who marries the girl. They give it to him. But we Arabs stay independent. We don’t have a financial commitment.²⁴ We don’t give²⁵ money and gold and a car. We bathe the girl and dress her up and give her to the man, for him to take her.’ (29.02)

dahab maafi
‘There’s no gold?’

<H> dahab, la zamaan maafi, laakin alyoom fi, zamaan, maafi dahab idussu leeha suure hine, iguulu suure aṛəbaa, irubd’u laha kaarŋe, idussu leeha hijuul,²⁶ bidissu laha xátam fi ašaabeeha, isowwu leeha arafa, isawwu laha ngummaaya,²⁷ lakin alyoom, alyoom maafi, alyoom ilummu laha dahab (29:22)

²⁴ *Gad’iya*, ‘backbiting’, also, ‘a commitment to give money or goods to a person’. In this case the speaker is using it to refer to the (perceived) Kanuri custom of giving money to the groom, though this is not a conventional meaning.

²⁵ *ma m-n-aad’i, nabarrid al bit, ...* ‘We don’t give, we bath the girl’. For the long-term history of the *m < *b* assimilation, see Owens 2018.

²⁶ *Hijuul*, ‘necklace’

²⁷ *Ngummaaya* ‘hair style, hair net’

‘Gold. No, in former times there wasn’t. But today there is. Formerly there wasn’t. They put on a bracelet here, they say four bracelets, they tie on a amber (necklace), they attach a leg bracelet for her and a ring on her fingers, they would make her a special hairstyle with a part down the middle and a hair style with a bun in front. Today they collect her gold.’ (29.22)

aḍ ḍahab le l bitt

‘The money is for the girl.’

<H> le l bit, le l bit, al abu ilimmu le bitta, irubd’a laha ḍahab, wa idissu laha xatam, wa idissu leeha ḍahab fi eedeeha, laakin ma ilimmu watiir ma ilimmu šey le r raajil
 ‘For the girl, the girl. The father collects them for his daughter. He ties on the gold (on her neck) and puts on a ring for her and gold on her arms. But they don’t give a car and they don’t collect anything for the husband.’

iwaddi akil

‘He sends food.’

<H> akil iwaddu šuwaalaat katiir, ris dool, qalla dool,²⁸ kuṛut ilimma (29:45)

‘Food he sends a lot of bags of it, like rice, and grain, they collect everything.’ (29.45)

<D> šaba saait inti fi d diiraan da, [side change] keef al axiide bigat šik be hine l bərne (30:02)

‘Like when you were in the camps, how is the marriage different from that in the city?’ (30.02)

<H> zamaan fi d diiraan da, fi d diiraan da, aada hiil al aṛab da, kuure fi d door da, ar raajil kan maša bədawwir bitta al bitt min abuuha,

‘Formerly in the camps, in the camps, the Arabic custom was, formerly in the camp the man’s (father) would go asking for his daughter,²⁹ the girl from her father.’

<D> aah

‘Ah

<H> bimši bəḍ’alubha buguul leeha ana filaan, alyoom ana raayid bittak, bidoorha le waladii, bijiib leea rijaal tineen walla taḷaata, binšidu (30:21)

‘He’d go and ask for her and tell her, I am so and so, and today I want your daughter, he’d want her for my son. He’d bring two or three men and ask.’ (30.21)

<D> mm

‘mm’

<H> binšu binšidu al aṃ, filaana, ha, dawwa bittiki, fulaan ja bədawwərha le walada, ‘Then they (the bride’s father) would go and ask the mother. So and so. Ha. Here’s your daughter. So and so came and want her for his daughter.’

<D> mm

‘mm’

²⁸Note use of demonstrative as type marker ‘things like rice and grain’, an influence from Kanuri (-so ‘generalizing plural suffix’) and an areal feature.

²⁹Corrected in following utterance.

<H> keŋ gulti, yo fulaan ja bədawwərha le walada wi?, ha šunu aaditki, ha taguul aatti ana, bəjuubu ley, zamaan da, al maal mi raxiis, šaba jakkaaya, jakkaaya wahade, jakka tineen, biyaad’ú, haw bəjiibu leeha kilfe hiil bagara,
 ‘What did you say? Okay, so and so came and is asking for her on behalf of her son? “Ya”. “And what is your³⁰ requirement,³¹ and you say, as far as my requirement goes, they’ll bring me, formerly money wasn’t cheap, like a jikka,³² one jikka, two jikka and they’d give him and they’d bring her a dowry in the form a cow.’

<D> mm (30:46)
 ‘mm’ (30.46)

<H> bagar tineen šawaayil,
 ‘Two milking cows.’

<D> wəi
 ‘Ya’

<H> bəhalbuuhin le l bit, kan sána, kan santeen hadar birehhiluuha da, bəjuubu leeha bágar, al bágar deel bəhalbuuhin,
 ‘They’d milk them for the girl, for a year, or two years up to when they bring her home. They’d bring her cow(s) and these cows they’d milk.’

<D> mm
 ‘mm’

<H> gaal tašrab labanhin di l kilfe gaal, al arab kuure bəguulu kilfe,³³
 ‘It was said, you drink their milk, this was the surety. Arabs used to call it a dowry.’

<D> aa
 ‘aa’

<H> bijiibu laha al bagar, taw bəhalbu laha labanhin, walla sana, kan al bit sayayre da santeen kula ar raajil bərrajjaaha,
 ‘They’d bring her the cows and milk them, either for a year or if the girl was small even two years as the man awaited her.’³⁴

<D> mm (31:07)
 ‘mm’ (31.07)

<H> be nahaar bəguṃṃu le l ərše, bəxud’d’u fooga sariir amiyaan, bəxud’d’u fooga dililyaat, arəbaa,
 ‘In the daytime they leave for the wedding. They arrange a bed, they’d arrange four cured skins.’

³⁰ Addressing the mother.

³¹ *ḡaada* ‘custom, customary exchange of goods or money’, in this case a dowry.

³² ‘Money wasn’t cheap’ refers to the fact that in the past 40 years inflation has greatly reduced the value of the naira. A jikka is twenty naira, today a paltry sum, but 40 years ago a large amount of money.

³³ *Kilfe*, ‘surety’, dowry in this case.

³⁴ The girl might be twelve at the time of the arrangement and be married at thirteen.

<D> mm
'mm'

<H> al heela gaadir diliyaat sitte,
'If he can up to six skins.'

<D> mm
'mm'

<H> bəxud'd'uuhin, haw bəgd'ao sarti, abu l walad kula bəgd'aaʔ, šadara, jingulee,
haw maʔaafi, kuṛt bišəriihin,
'They put them and set an appointment. The father of the groom cuts, a tree, in the
form of the upper frame for cover of central bed in the hut, and mats for covering the
hut. He'd buy all of them.'

<D> mm
'mm'

<H> haw bišəri sariira ad diliyaat, al xad'd'oohin fooga,
'And he'd buy a bed made of hides, which they added to the goods.'

<D> wəi (31:30)
'ya' (31.30)

<H> dahadda bīju, bəgd'ao serti le l urše,
'Then they'd come and set a date for the wedding.'

<D> mhm
'mhm'

<H> ha gad'aʔo s sarti, al maal kula bijuubú, gade bəjiibu, qalla šuwaalaat tineen, gaal
bəduḡḡu ajiine bədawuuha, kula bijuubuhin, (31:43)
'And they set a date. The money they'd bring, two sacks of grain, to make dough, to
pound (for the grain), kula bijuubuhin, they'd bring as well.' (31:43)

<D> mm
'mm'

<H> maa l bagar deel, ha xalaas bəgd'aʔo as serti, šaba ambaakir al xamiis bəbənu l
beet,
'With these cows, and finally they'd set the date, like tomorrow Thursday they'll
erect the house.'

<D> mm
'mm'

<H> daada biləmmu doola bəbənu l beet, ha doola, binšu bəjiibu l aṛuuš, kuure maafi
watiir,

‘Then these ones would gather and erect a house, and these ones would go and bring the bride. There didn’t used to be cars.’

<D> wəi
‘ya’

<H> bijiibuuha foog at tawwaar,
‘And they’d bring her on a bull.’

<D> foog at tawwaar, ud’fa (31:55)
‘On the bull, a bridal platform’ (31.55)

<H> ud’fa bəguulu fulaan, alyoom rahhal le walada,
‘A bridal platform. They’d say, today so and so is marrying off for his son.’

<D> aa
‘aa’

<H> tawaar talatiin, tawwaar xamsiin zamaan an naas
‘(a procession of) thirty bulls, fifty bulls in those days.’

<D> aa
‘ya’

<H> bəməloohin akil, haw bəšuuluuha foog aj jawaad al aṛuus, haw wa an nəswaan bərkaban foog at tawwaar, dugó bijiibuuha le l beet, bəsowwu laha xumaam, xuməmmə itineen, bəsowwu laha ađáff tineen, be juṛṣaanhin, (32:14)
‘They’d load them (the bulls) up with food and carry her on the stallion of the bride. And the women would ride on the bulls, then they bring her to the hut and arrange her goods, her two packages³⁵ and they make her two thin branches (decorated) with bells.’

<D> wəi
‘ya’

<H> dugo bəjiibuuha, bənazzuluuha,
‘then they bring her and set her down.’

<D> aa
‘aah’

<H> ha bəgandulu al walad, bəbənu al beet hana małaafi, bədaḅho t toor, min aṣ ṣaḅa niswaan bəṣuud’an al miskeerú,
‘And they lead the groom on a decorated horse and erect the house of mats and slaughter a bull, and in the morning the women would prepare the bridal feast.’

<D> aa

³⁵ This is the only attestation in the entire corpus of *xuməmmə* as plural of *xumaam* ‘goods’, which is a collective. *Xumaam* itself is attested in X tokens, hence is a highly frequent lexeme.

‘aa’

<H> dugó bəšoquuin foog at tawwaar (32:24)

‘Then they bid them good-bye on their bulls.’

kam

‘How many bulls were slaughtered?’

<H> bəḍḅao toor waahid bas, haw ḅəsuud’u eeš, bəgassumú le n naas, haw an naas bil’abo, doola bigalliba foog al xeel, kuure az zamaan az zeen, alyoom ka, biji fi l watiir,

‘They’d only slaughter one and then prepare the food and distribute it among the people and the people would dance, and others would gallow their horses. It used to be great. Today he comes in a car.’

<D> mm (32:39)

‘mm’ (32.29)

<H> alyoom binšu binšidu min al mara?, bijiibu leeha, buguul leek benadowwir šiiši ašara tineen ḍahaḅ, buguulu nadowwir jakka iširiin, buguulu nadowwir, sanda xamsiin sanda sittiin, alyoom al arab barra diiraan kula,

‘Today they ask the woman directly and they bring her, they tell you, “We want twelve gold pieces, they say we want twenty jikkas,³⁶ they say we want, fifty roles of cloth, or sixty. Today even Arabs in the camps are like that.’

<D> aha

‘aha’

<H> al bagara kuuře bunkaho al mara bunkaho leeha foog bagara, tihitha ijile, al mara kan šartaha matini bagara tineen, dim šartaha matini,

‘The cows, formerly they’d calculate a marriage by one cow with a calf. If a woman of higher status two cows.’

<D> wəi

‘ya’

<H> am šartan waahid bagaratha waahide, bunkaho laha kuure kula

‘A woman of lower status one cow.’

<D> šartan matini³⁷ haw šartan waahid da keef (33:10)

‘A doubled condition and one condition how is that?’ (33.10)

<H> deela šaba šaba di xaadim haw di hurra ke, naas waahidiin humma kula šartuhum tineen,

‘These ones, like she is a free lady, so some people they deserve two. Like for these, the one is a servant and the other is free born. Some people have the status of two cows.’

³⁶ Cf. above, where only one or two jikkas were asked for.

³⁷ *šartan matini* Lit. „doubled conditions“. What the groom needs to give to the bride. As explained below, dependent on whether the bride comes from a wealthy or a poor family.

<D> aa
‘aa’

<H> haw naas waadiin kan bagarathum waahid hiil an nikaah,
‘And others merit one cow for the marriage.’

<D> yowa
‘okay’

<H> naas waadiin kan bagarəm tineen, šabaha doola qanaya haw doola masaakiin,
‘Some people merit two cows, and it’s like these are wealthy and the other ones are poor.’

<D> aa doola masaakiin
‘These ones are poor.’

<H> da ke bas, zamaan da kula ke bas, yowa ha dahada bunkaho, bijiibuha aloom fi
l watiir, bəbənu beethəm hana al małaafi, haw bimšu le l watiir, fi l watiir bijiibu al
wataair al kuḃaar deel, how bərehhilu, alyoom sawwo ke (33:35)
‘That’s how it is. It used to be just like that. Okay then they married. Today they bring
her in a car, and erect their mat house, and they go in a car, in a car, in these big cars
and they bring her home. That’s how it is today.’ (33.35)

<D> al bitt ma t tašiiffa be yoom kula
‘The bride, you don’t see her, even today.’

<H> le r raajil da, kuure al mara al bit ma bittašiif ar raajil, kuure da raajil kan ja
gaalo fulaana alyoom jo bədownwuruuha da,
‘As far the the man goes, it used to be the girl didn’t see the man. Formerly if a man
came they said, so and so lady they came asking for her.’

<D> mm
‘mm’

<H> gadé hi millabbida leel wa nahaar tabki, amma alyoom hinna bas bənšan
bišiifan ar rujaal, hinna alyoom hinna bəšiifan ar rəjaal,
‘And she’d be hidden night and day crying. But today they (women) go and see the
men. Today they go and see the men.’

<D> wəi (33:54)
‘ya’ (33.54)

<H> haw al waahide tard’a be raajilha kan ma tidoora kula, kan ma tidoora kula tenši
taguul le rafiigta, ana fulaan da ma badoora, kan ad’ooni leya kula ma bagoot,
‘And the one if she wants her man, even if she doesn’t, if she doesn’t want him, she
goes and tells her friend. “I don’t want so and so; if you marry me to him I won’t
stay”.’

<D> aaaa
‘aa’

<H> amma kuure da ma bişuuru al maṛa, biyaad’uuha bas, kan gaʔadat ye xalaas, kan abat kula xalaas tamərug, amma alyoom ille bişuuru al maṛa (34:11)

‘But formerly they didn’t ask the woman. They’d just give her. If she stayed okay and even if she refused she’d just leave. But today they ask the woman.’ (34.11)

naas bugalləbo be l xeel seyí,

‘When you were living in the camps, the people wouldn’t the people have horse shows galloping horses?’

<H> bəgalləbo be l xeel

‘They had horse shows.’

<D> galab al xeel bisowwú keef, be an naas dool biju bulummu haw ke da

‘A horse show, how did they do it, once the people came and gathered, and so on.’

<H> an naas bəlummu da šaba nəswaan bəd’urran ke, šabha dugut geyit al goru da šifta, an niswaan kuṛt deel, minna am suure, be suureea, am kaarṁe, be kaarṁaṁa, am ɗahaḅ zamaan da mi maafi katiir, kuṛt biju bəd’urru, haw ar rijjaal bərkabo foog al xeel, amma šaba baṛra min al hille,

‘The people would gather like the women would form a line like this, they’re lined up forming like a wall. The women all of these, those with bracelets, with her bracelet, with her amber necklace, with gold – in those days there wasn’t a lot of gold – they’d all line up,³⁸ and the men would mount their horses, but all of this was outside of the village.’

³⁸ In their festive attire.