

Tia Greer, Questionnaire #3

Questionnaire (put reference #:page # after each entry)

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Amharic, Afro-Asiatic, Semetic, South, Ethiopian, South, Transversal, Amharic-Argobba (1, p.1)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): amh

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): between latitude 9° -13°45'N and longitude 36°-40°30'E (2, p1)

1.4 Brief history:

- “Since their emergence as a self-conscious ethnic and linguistic group in the beginning of the second millennium A.D. the Amhara have been the main political heirs of Axum, the ancient Semitic kingdom that dominated the northern plateau, the Red Sea, and occasionally sections of the Arabian Red Sea coast, from several centuries before Christ until well after the rise of Islam. From the restoration of the Solomonid Dynasty (1270) until today there has been but one Ethiopian Emperor, Yohannis IV (reigned 1872-89), who was not an Amhara, and the presence of a British expeditionary force under Lord Napier was instrumental in his rise to power.” (4, .190)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- Similarities between traditional Amhara and European feudalism: “There are similarities in the ideology of social stratification also, in the ways that people conceptualize and justify the major divisions or “estates” that make up society. The Amhara frequently speak of the nobility, the clergy, and the farming population.” (4, p191-192)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- “It is mountainous, separated from the Red Sea by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment in the west borders the hot lowland in the Sudan.” (3, p.1)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- 21,600,000 in Ethiopia (2007 census) (1, p1)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): barley, broad beans, bearded wheat, linseed, lentils, chick peas, millet, sorghum, and gesho (hops) (9, p.42)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Sheep, goats, and cows (3, p.3)
- “Fishing is mostly limited to the three-month rainy season, when rivers are full and the water is muddy from runoff so that the fish cannot see the fishers. Hunting elephants used to be a sport of young feudal nobles, but hunting for ivory took place largely in non-Amhara regions. Since rifles became available in Amhara farming regions, hunting for Ethiopian duikers and guinea fowl has diminished.” (3, p.4)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- “The most highly prized item of technology is the rifle, which symbolizes the proud warrior traditions of the Amhara and a man’s duty to defend his inherited land.” (5, p.279)

2.4 Food storage: No information found

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Division of labor: (9, p.77)

- men: agriculture, animal husbandry, slaughtering, military, religious occupations, healers, writers, weavers, smiths, leatherwork, hunting, teaching, judges
- women: kitchen work, grinding, crushing, and husking grain, carrying water from valley, fetching firewood, spinning cotton thread, pottery making, tattooer, and hairdresser
- both: sale of products on market, servants, beggary, musician-singer

2.6 Land tenure:

- “The hillsides, if not terrace farmed, serve as pasturage for all hamlets on the hill. Not only sheep and goats, but also cows, climb over fairly steep, bushy hillsides to feed. Some hamlets are fenced in by thorn bushes against night-roving hyenas and to corral cattle.” (3, p3)
- “Subsistence farming provides the main economy for most rural Amhara. The traditional method required much land to lie fallow because no fertilization was applied. Cattle manure is formed into flat cakes, sun dried, and used as fuel for cooking. New land, if available, is cleared by the slash-and-burn method. A wooden scratch plow with a pointed iron tip, pulled by oxen, is the main farming tool. Insecurity of land tenure has long been a major factor in discouraging Amhara farmers from producing more than the amount required for subsistence.” (3, p.4)

2.7 Ceramics: no information found

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: no information found

2.9 Food taboos:

- The legume called gwayya is feared because walking or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the bones (9, p.42)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? No information found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): no information found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): no information found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): no information found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): no information found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): no information found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): no information found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- “The traditional age of a girl at first marriage may be as young as 14, to protect her virginity, and to enable the groom to tame her more easily. A groom three to five years older is preferred.” (3, p7)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: no information found

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: no information found

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

- “the head is obligated to provide marriage-gift cattle and a wedding feast for all the boys and girls he “raises” and who “serve him,” not just for those of them who happen to be his offspring.” (4, p.199)
- “The cattle, which are essential for cultivating the land, are contributed by the parents or guardian of the bride and groom in equal value at the time of the marriage and should be divided in case of divorce.” (4, p.200)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- “Though the authority of the household head is thus relatively independent of kinship ties, the land-use rights on which the household as an economic unit relies are not, for plots of land and potential rights to additional plots are inherited bilaterally—that is, by sons and daughters (or their husbands or children) through both parents. In Amhara theory these actual and potential rights, both of which are termed rist, are rights to a share of the land first held by an illustrious ancestor (a principal ancestor or wanna abbat) whose name the land still bears. The arable lands in older Amhara regions are these ancestral blocks, which vary from one half to two or three square kilometers in area. In Amhara legal theory rist rights in these lands are the inalienable and inextinguishable birthright of all the first ancestor’s descendant’s in all lines, regardless of whether or not the rights were utilized by intermediate lineal ancestors in the claimant’s pedigree. In fact, most claims are forgotten.” (4, p.199-200)
- “though rist land rights are “hereditary,” the amount of land a man can control by virtue of these rights is dependent, above all, on his political influence; and land use rights over plots are considered to be held by individuals.” (4, p.200)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- “Socialization in the domestic unit begins with the naming of the baby, a privilege that usually belongs to the mother. She may base it on her predominant emotion at the time, on a significant event occurring at the time, or on a special wish she may have for the personality or future of her baby.” (3, p.7)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: no information found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): no information found

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? no information found

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) no information found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? no information found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape no information found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) no information found

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? no information found

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring no information found

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? no information found

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females no information found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: no information found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): no information found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? no information found

4.24 Joking relationships? no information found

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

- “Fields are given to patrilineal descendants, cattle to all offspring.” (3, p.7)
- “The extended patrilocal, patrilineal, patriarchal family is particularly strong among holders of REST land tenure, but found, in principle, even on the hamlet level of sharecroppers.” (3, p.6)
- “inheritable land, REST, was subject to taxation (which could be passed on to the sharecroppers) and to expropriation in case of rebellion against the king.” (3, p.6)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules no information found

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

There are three types of marriage in Amhara tradition: (3, p.7)

- Eucharist church marriage (Qurban): minority of marriages, no divorce is possible, widows and widowers may remarry, except for priests, who are expected to become monks
- Kin-negotiated civil marriage (Semanya): most common, no church ceremony is involved, divorce can be negotiated
- Temporary marriage (Damoz): obliges the husband to pay housekeeper's wages for a period stated in advance. This was felt to be an essential arrangement in an economy where restaurant and hotel services were not available. The wife had no right of

inheritance, but if children were conceived during the contract period, they could make a claim for part of the father's property, should he die.

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

- “Socialization in the domestic unit begins with the naming of the baby, a privilege that usually belongs to the mother. She may base it on her predominant emotion at the time, on a significant event occurring at the time, or on a special wish she may have for the personality or future of her baby.” (3, p.7)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

- “The traditional marriage alliance occurs between two families of relatively equal wealth and status who have children ready for marriage. It is important that each family be of “clean bone,” that is, free from the stigma of having lineage relatives who suffered from leprosy, had the evil eye, were slaves, or who were known to have been involved in incestuous relationships. It is also very important for the girl's virtue to be intact if the marriage is to be legitimate.” (10, p 752)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

- “The day of the formal betrothal is kept a secret from the prospective spouses, feared that because they are psychologically ill-prepared for such an occasion they will run away. The child has no decision-making rights with regard to this first marriage. In fact, the betrothal may be the time the couple get their first glimpse of each other. On this day each family pledges the amount of wealth to be contributed to the new union and sets a definite date for the marriage ceremonies.” (10, p.753)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: no information found

Warfare/homicide

4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: no information found

4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: no information found

4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

- “This propensity for aggression is part of a long tradition of warfare. The history of the Amhara people is punctuated through the centuries by wars with neighboring tribes. Successful warfare has won them control of large expanses of territory and dominion over numerous groups of people. Their history is also marked by internecine conflicts among feudal lords competing for territory to extend their range of power. And today, with the political power consolidated under the once very powerful emperor, the emphasis on masculinity continues to be reinforced by the competition for land among a peasant's siblings and bilaterally related kin and by the rich cultural resources that glorify war and aggression for the sake of keeping family land sacrosanct.” (10, p.752)

4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- “Throughout their period of ascendancy, the Amhara were frequently engaged in warfare with their Islamic or pagan neighbors or among themselves.” (4, p.193)

4.35 Cannibalism? no information found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- “The hamlet may consist of two to a dozen huts. Thus, the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or semi-isolated farmstead, and another hamlet may be close by if their plowed fields are near.” (3, p3)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- “Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, settlements seldom remain on the same spot for as much as a century.” (9, p41-42)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- “The peasant class is divided between landowning farmers, who, even though they have no formal political power, can thwart distant government power by their rural remoteness, poor roads, and weight of numbers, and the sharecroppers, who have no such power against local landlords. Fear of a person who engages in a skilled occupation, *TEBIB* (lit., “the knowing one, ” to whom supernatural secrets are revealed), enters into class stratification, especially for blacksmiths, pottery makers, and tanners. They are despised as members of a lower caste, but their products are needed, and therefore they are tolerated. Below them on the social scale are the descendants of slaves who used to be imported from the negroid *Shanqalla* of the Sudanese border, or the Nilotic *Barya*, so that both terms became synonymous with “slave.” (3, p.8)
- “In theory, the emperor was the ultimate head of the entire Ethiopian state, head of the army, the church, and disposer of all lands and offices. In actuality, both the power of hereditary feudal lords and the difficulty of travel restricted his authority until the advent of modern communications and air travel in this century. While it was in the best interests of the emperor to appoint as many loyal provincial governors as he could, certain hereditary nobles held traditional control of areas which the emperor, unless he wanted to go to war, had little likelihood of reclaiming. Below the provincial governors were the village chiefs (*CHEQA SUM*), who also, in theory, represented and were appointed by the emperor. In most cases, however, they were the hereditary leading men of the village. Governors more often had a say in making a choice between contenders, and the emperor's role in most situations was only to settle a dispute or make an appointment official. A *CHEQA SUM* acted as a judge, presided over meetings of the village council, attended weddings, and was involved in all land transfers and disputes. He is the lowest representative of the emperor and was responsible for communicating all decrees of the central government to his village.” (3, p.9)
- “Today most of this feudal structure has been replaced by a system of government ministries, a parliament, a well-disciplined modern army, and a formally bureaucratic central administration. Modernization, however, has been an uneven process. Many

of the attitudes, standards, and sentiments characteristic of the old order still persist, as do many of the local institutions on which it rested, particularly in rural regions.” (4, p.193)

5.4 Post marital residence: “When marriage occurs, usually early in life, a son may receive use of part of his father's rented (or owned) field and build his hut nearby. If no land is available owing to fragmentation, the son may reluctantly establish himself at the bride's hamlet. When warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, in-laws may also be able to move in.” (3, p.6)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): no information found

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

- “The state of reason and incipient discipline begins gradually at about age 5 for girls and 7 for boys. The former assist their mothers in watching babies and fetching wood; boys take sheep and cows to pasture and, with slingshots, guard crops against birds and baboons. Both can be questioned in court to express preferences concerning guardianship in case of their parents' divorce. Neglect of duty is punished by immediate scolding and beating.” (3, p.8)
- “Formal education in the traditional rural church school rarely began before age 11 for boys. Hazing patterns to test courage are common among boys as they grow up, both physically and verbally. Girls are enculturated to appear shy, but may play house with boys prior to adolescence. Adolescence is the beginning of stricter obedience for both sexes, compensated by pride in being assigned greater responsibilities. Young men do most of the plowing, and by age 18 may be addressed as GOBEZ, signifying (strong, handsome) young warrior.” (3, p.8)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: no information found

5.8 Village and house organization:

- “To avoid being flooded during the rainy season, settlements are typically built on or near hilltops. There is usually a valley in between, where brooks or irrigation canals form the border for planted fields” (3, p3)
- “The membership of a household normally includes the head, his spouse, perhaps an aging parent of either, and as many of the head's and his wife's respective children, collateral kinsmen (reckoned bilaterally), poor dependent retainers, and slaves as are useful in the exploitation of the economic resources at the head's disposal. ‘Extended’ or ‘joint’ family households are not found” (4, p198)
- “Membership in the household is not determined in Amhara theory or practice by kinship ties, for all members except infants and small children can move from household to household, provided, of course, that the new household's head is willing to take them in and that the calculated cost of abandoning the old household's head is not too great.” (4, p.199)
- “While the head must be shown the utmost deference and outward submission by all the members of his household in all social interaction, in fact all of them have the option of leaving if they are not satisfied with his leadership, and many of them have rights in resources which they can take away with them. It is this mutual sanction of expulsion or departure rather than semisacralized or mystical notions of kinship, which guarantees reasonably proper conduct in social relations between the household member and its head. Satisfactory relations between members are maintained only through internal ranking by age and sex, and the vigilance and mediation of the ‘master’.” (4, p.200)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): no information found

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? no information found

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

- “Social organization is linked to land tenure of kinfolk, feudalistic traditions and the church, ethnic division of labor, gender, and age status” (3, p.8)
- “The Amhara farmer and his lord did not consider themselves to be of different breed or blood. Often they claimed descent from a common ancestor and acknowledged bilaterally traced ties of kinship. Nor were their aspirations so very different, for the Amhara military ethos, with its promise of rewards of land and title for daring conduct in battle, was shared by all. There were differences in life-style and etiquette to be sure, but they were more of degree than kind. The peasant-farmer, like the lord, tried his best to gain control over land (particularly over usufructuary rights known as rist) and to build a large household of dependents who would serve him, show him respect, and give him honor. His well-being, like that of the lord, depended primarily on his success in the art of managing his relationships with his dependents, rivals, and superiors, and not on the number of his children, or his position in solidary local groups based on kinship or vicinage.” (4, p.192)
- A “constant concern with the etiquette of deference is not primarily oriented to membership in ranked segments of society, descent groups, or the nexus of kinship relations. It is rather defined, at least in secular scenes, by personal, dyadic, hierarchical social ties between persons who have access to political office and land, and those who depend upon them. The Amhara concern with these social relationships is related to their central integrative role in Amhara social organization. It is manifest in the pattern of ties that bind men to one another and shape their interests. It is consistent with the image offered by Amhara culture of man's nature, man's relationship with his fellowmen, and his relationship with his God. It is a fundamental postulate of Amhara culture, evidenced in each of these dimensions of the Amhara “world view,” that social order, which is good, can be created and maintained only through hierarchical, legitimate control, a control that ultimately must be authorized by God.” (4, p.194)

5.12 Trade:

- “Mile-deep chasms and tortuous trails contributed to political fission in inhibited centralization. They also made transportation difficult and expensive. Trade was limited to relatively small regions and to higher-cost merchandise such as gold, salt, and civet.” (4, p.193)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- “...skilled occupations like blacksmithing, pottery making, and tanning are held in low esteem and, in rural regions, are usually associated with socially excluded ethnic groups. Moreover, ethnic workmanship is suspected of having been acquired by dealings with evil spirits who enabling the artisans turn themselves into hyenas at night to consume corpses, cause diseases by

staring, and turn humans into donkeys to utilize their labor. Such false accusations can be very serious. On the other hand, the magic power accredited to these workers is believed to make their products strong, whereas those manufactured by an outsider who might have learned the trade would soon break. The trade of weaving is not afflicted by such suspicions, although it is sometimes associated with Muslims or migrants from the south.” (3, p.5)

- “In the past, non-Amhara slaves were kept in the households of important men (tiliq sawoch) and nobles. The latter categories ranged from local lords who controlled only a single estate with less than 100 resident farming families, through more important title-holding lords with several estates, to great regional governors who held numerous estates and received tribute from the lesser lords within their districts. Far above the greatest regional lords in prestige stood the semisacred throne which was located at most times in a military camp, a mobile city of tents, for, in traditional Ethiopia, there were no major and lasting cities.” (4, p.190)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

- “Ceremonies often mark the annual cycle for the public, despite the sacerdotal emphasis of the religion. The calendar of Abyssinia is Julian, with the year beginning on 11 September, following ancient Egyptian usage, and is called AMETE MEHRAT (year of grace). Thus, the Abyssinian year 1948 a.m. corresponds roughly with the Gregorian (Western) AD 1956. The new year begins with the month of MESKEREM, which follows the rainy season and is named after the first religious holy day of the year, MESQEL-ABEBA, celebrating the Feast of the Cross. On the seventeenth day, huge poles are stacked up for the bonfire in the evening, with much public parading, dancing, and feasting. By contrast, Christmas (LEDET) has little social significance except for the GENNA game of the young men. Far more important is Epiphany (TEMQET), on the eleventh day of TER. Ceremonial parades escort the priests who carry the TABOT, symbolic of the holy ark, on their heads, to a water pool. There are all-night services, public feasting, and prayers for plentiful rains. The rains mark the end of the GENNA season and the beginning of the GUKS tournaments fought on horseback by the young men. The long Lenten season is approaching, and clergy as well as the public look forward to the feasting at Easter (FASSIKA), on the seventeenth day of MIYAZYA. Children receive new clothes and collect gifts, chanting house to house. Even the voluntary fraternal association MEHABBER is said to have originated from the practice of private communion. Members take turns as hosts at monthly meetings, drinking barley beer together with the confessor-priest, who intones prayers. Members are expected to act as a mutual aid society, raising regular contributions, extending loans, even paying for the TAZKAR (formal memorial service) forty days after a member's death, if his family cannot afford it.” (3, p.10)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- “In rural regions, the rules of the church have the de facto force of law, and many people are consecrated to church functions: priests, boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, monks, and nuns.” (3, p.9)
- “Besides the ecclesiastical function of the QES (parish priest), the chorister-scribe, who is not ordained, fulfills many services. He translates the liturgy from Ge'ez to Amharic, chants and sometimes composes devotional poetry (QENE), and writes amulets. The latter may be unofficial and discouraged by the priests, but ailing persons believe strongly in them and may use them to prevent disease.” (3, p.10)
- “The basic concepts and practices of Amhara medicine can be traced to ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East and can also be attributed to regional ecological links within Ethiopia. Often no sharp distinctions are made between bodily and spiritual ailments, but there are special occupations: the WOGGESHA (surgeon-herbalist) is a pragmatist; the DEBTERA (scribe) invokes the spirit world. The latter is officially or unofficially linked to the church, but the ZAR cult is apart and may even be female dominated. Its spirit healing has a complex cosmology; it involves the social status of the patient and includes group therapy. The chief ZAR doctor is often a matriarch who entered the profession when she herself was possessed by a spirit; she has managed to control some powerful spirits that she can then employ in her battles to overcome the spirits that possess her patients. No cure is expected, only control through negotiation and appeasement of the offended spirit, in the hope of turning it into a WEQABI (protective spirit). By contrast, possession by an evil spirit is considered more serious and less manageable than possession by a ZAR, and there is no cult. An effort is made to prevent it by wearing amulets and avoiding persons, who are skilled in trades like blacksmithing and pottery making. Since these spirits are believed to strike beautiful or successful persons, such individuals--especially if they are children--must not be praised out loud. If a person sickens and wastes away, an exorcism by the church may be attempted, or a TANQWAY (diviner- sorcerer) may be consulted; however, the latter recourse is considered risky and shameful.” (3, p11)

6.2 Stimulants: no information found

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

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- “When death is approaching, elder kin of the dying person bring the confessor, and the last will concerning inheritance is pronounced. Fields are given to patrilineal descendants, cattle to all offspring. Personal belongings, such as ox hide mats and a SHAMMA (toga), may be given to the confessor, who administers last rites and assigns a burial place in the churchyard.” (3, p7)
- “The corpse is washed, wrapped in a SHAMMA, carried to church for the mass, and buried, traditionally without a marker except for a circle of rocks. Women express grief with loud keening and wailing. This is repeated when kinfolk arrive to console the relatives of the deceased. A memorial feast (TAZKAR) is held forty days after death, when the soul has the earliest opportunity to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast begin at the time of the funeral: money is provided for the priest to recite the FETET, the prayer for absolution, and materials, food, and drink are accumulated. It is often the greatest single economic expenditure of an individual's lifetime and, hence, a major social event. For the feasting, a large, rectangular

shelter (DASS) is erected, and even distant kin are expected to participate and consume as much TALLA and WOT as available.” (3, p12)

6.4 Other rituals:

- “the Amhara do have their rituals and ceremonies, including the annual Coptic and national holidays and the monthly saints' days. In addition, daily and monthly rites celebrate spirits whose identity lies outside the teachings of the Ethiopian Church” (10, p.751)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- “It is said that Eve had thirty children, and one day God asked Eve to show Him her children. Eve became suspicious and apprehensive and hid fifteen of them from the sight of God. God knew her act of disobedience and declared the fifteen children she showed God as His chosen children and cursed the fifteen she hid, declaring that they go henceforth into the world as devils and wretched creatures of the earth. Now some of the children complained and begged God's mercy. God heard them and, being merciful, made some of them foxes, jackals, rabbits, etc., so that they might exist as Earth's creatures in a dignified manner. Some of the hidden children he left human, but sent them away with the curse of being agents of the devil. These human counterparts of the devil are the ancestors of the buda people. There occurs a pleat in time and the story takes up its theme again when Christ was baptized at age thirty.” (5, p.286)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- “The influence of the Church is nowhere more apparent than in a review of Amhara art. The Amhara have no concept which approximates “art” as it is used in English, and each of the varieties of Amhara graphic art—Church painting, occult drawing, and tattooing—is considered discrete, a distinctive instrument to achieve particular ends. Painting, for example, is largely didactic, depicting biblical scenes and personages, episodes from the lives of the saints and the history of the Church. In a style of obvious Byzantine affinity, the painter sets these motifs in contiguous panels upon the muslin-faced walls and ceilings of highland churches.” (8, p.2)
- “The occult drawing is known in Amharic as tselsem (cognate of the English “talisman”) and differs radically from the church painting in form, intent, and production. Ethiopian talismans, sewn into a leather amulet together with the appropriate herbal ingredients, are worn to ward off the numerous satans, persecutors of man and foes of the Church, who live in the forests, lakes, and rivers of the countryside and in the hearth ashes and beer dregs of the home. Both the church painter and talisman drawer are ecclesiastics, since a religious education is the sole means of acquiring the literacy and special knowledge required by these endeavors. Indeed, the paintings and drawings accompanying this article are the work of a single individual who lives in Gondar town (about thirty miles north of Lake Tana), national capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.” (8, p.2)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: no information found

6.8 Missionary effect:

- “A second important influence in the development of Amhara culture was heralded by the introduction of Christianity during the fourth century. These first missionaries were men from the eastern Mediterranean and, after the great schism announced at Chalcedon, the Ethiopian Church continued its ties with the Orthodox faction, as a dependency of the Coptic See of Alexandria. The success of Islam, sweeping across Egypt and Nubia, severely limited contact between the Abyssinian highland and the rest of Christendom. In consequence, the development of the Ethiopian Coptic Church and, ultimately, of its relationship to Amhara culture has been more substantially influenced by autochthonous forces than would otherwise have been the case.” (8, p.2)

6.9 RCR revival: no information found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: no information found

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? no information found

6.12 Is there teknonymy? no information found

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

- “The religious belief of most Amhara is Monophysite--that is, Tewahedo (Orthodox)--Christianity, to such an extent that the term "Amhara" is used synonymously with "Abyssinian Christian." Christian Amhara wear a blue neck cord (METEB), to distinguish themselves from Muslims.” (3, p9)
- “There are essentially four separate realms of supernatural beliefs. First, there is the dominant Monophysite Christian religion involving the Almighty God, the Devil, and the saints and angels in Heaven. Second, there are the zar and the adbar spirits, “protectors” who exact tribute in return for physical and emotional security and who deal out punishments for failure to recognize them through the practice of the appropriate rituals. Third is the belief in the buda, a class of people who possess the evil eye, and who exert a deadly power over the descendents of God's “chosen children.” The fourth category of beliefs includes the [unknown]ciraq and satan, ghouls and devils that prowl the countryside, creating danger to unsuspecting persons who cross their path.” (5, p.280)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- “...tattooing is typically the product of a laywoman whose operations—prophylactic, therapeutic, and cosmetic—are unconcerned with the forces of good and evil, saints and demons, which so preoccupy churchmen.” (8, p.3)

7.2 Piercings: no information found

7.3 Haircut: no information found

7.4 Scarification: no information found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- “Many designs are specific for body area and ailment; the zigzag, for example, customarily appears as multiple necklaces and is directed against goiter. Other patterns may be inscribed on several areas; circles and crucifixes appear on forehead and temples to prevent recurrent headaches, on the forearm for muscle paralysis, and at joints for rheumatism. The effectiveness of the designs is by means of an unknown *modus vivendi*, and innovation is discouraged on this account. Cosmetic and medical motives are frequently difficult to distinguish from one another: Prophylactic and therapeutic tattoos on face and throat are often regarded as fortuitously enhancing the bearer’s beauty. Similarly, essentially decorative tattooing is sometimes given a secondary, prophylactic, rationale; the “beaded ankle” motif, for example, is believed to attract the witch’s evil eye away from the vulnerable mouth area.” (8, p.11)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: no information found

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: no information found

7.8 Missionary effect: no information found

7.9 Types of clothing:

- “Whether it is at a church service or at court, on the trail or in the privacy of the homestead, decorous and elaborate forms of speech, dress, and gesture are employed by the Amhara to express toward one another appropriate degrees of subordination and superordination. In virtually all of these situations it is possible (with adequate knowledge) to discern a pattern of ranking, an ordered difference in the amount of deference that people give and receive. An accidental or transitional lapse in this orientation causes the Amhara discomfort or embarrassment. There is a moment of confusion or deliberate “not noticing” while people rearrange their positioning and their clothing so as to satisfactorily reorder the scene with regard to the main sources of secular or sacred authority.” (4, p.194)

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: no information found

8.2 Sororate, levirate: no information found

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): no information found

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- “In view of the emphasis of seeking security in kinship relations, there are also several formal methods of establishing fictive kinship, ZEMED HONE, provided the person to be adopted is ATTENTAM (“of good bones,” i.e., not of Shanqalla slave ancestry.) Full adoption provides a breast father (YETUT ABBAT) or a breast mother (YETET ENNAT). The traditional public ceremony included coating the nipples with honey and simulating breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence.” (3, p.6)
- “The international Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the Amhara National Region Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANRBANR) have entered into a collaborative research agreement to undertake policy research on sustainable land management in the highlands of Amhara Region, Ethiopia.” (2, p.4)

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