

CLASSIFICATION, METAPHOR and POWER: Built Space in Ethiopia

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Anthropology, semiotics, classification systems, and space

The present paper on traditional Ethiopian spatial organization¹ addresses a series of anthropological concerns. Starting from a text concerning mainly legal anthropology, it focuses on the structure of built space, until recently a rather neglected aspect of social structuring, and is thus conceived as a contribution to the anthropology of space. At the same time, in its search for the indigenous meaning of space, it gives a central position to the concept of classification system, which is examined by means of another concept, that of code, borrowed from and used according to semiotic theory.

Social and cultural anthropology, as the other social sciences, has recently experienced a paradigm shift. The poststructuralist (or rather neo-structuralist; see Frank 1989) and postmodern paradigm, related to the interpretative anthropology of the sixties (Marcus, Fischer 1986: 33), though not internally unified, nevertheless seems to involve a focus on certain crucial issues and usually, though not always, remains enclosed within the limits defined by these issues. Meaning, i.e., the semiotic, is seen as the nucleus of anthropology, and this in a triple sense. First, the object of inquiry is meaning as conceived of by the 'other', the 'native's point of view' on his/her society and on him/herself (see, for example, Marcus, Fischer 1986: 33, 34; Marcus, Cushman 1982: 34, 39, 61; Sangren 1988: 420). Second, the encounter with the other through which this first aim is achieved is seen within a communicational, dialogic context (Clifford 1980: 529). Third, the anthropological account of this encounter is approached through a literary perspective, as a text shaped by a literary genre (see for example Marcus, Cushman 1982: 25, 26–27, 29, 59, 61; Marcus, Fischer 1986: 23,

¹ A first approach to this topic was published by the present authors as 'The symbolism of space in Ethiopia' (Lagopoulos, Stylianoudi 2001: 55–95).

43; Strathern 1987a: 288–289; Strathern 1987b: 269; Mascia-Lees *et al.* 1989: 9, 30; Spencer 1989: 145, 158).

This new, literary, interpretative, self-reflective, or experimental anthropology raises real and central anthropological issues, but it is not without excesses. Thus, there is a dominant tendency, following a general poststructuralist and postmodernist rationale, to isolate anthropology within the universe of semiosis. Though there are exceptions to this viewpoint – such as the approach adopted by George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer (1986: 35, 39, 77–95, 108–110), who advocate the incorporation of the local semiotics within the internalized and larger systems of global political economy – the current trend in anthropology, following the general poststructuralist and postmodernist mood of reaction against the rationalism inherited from the Enlightenment, is the rejection of ‘grand narratives’ and indeed of the scientific enterprise itself. This, the thoroughgoing postmodern position, is in our opinion not convincing. Beyond the contradiction of rejecting ‘grand narratives’ in favor of a new grand narrative of local narratives, differences, etc. (Lagopoulos 1993: 271–272), the terms and the arguments used are philosophically vague and at times uninformed (see on this point the thorough critique by Reyna 1994).

The semiotic awareness of the new anthropology, which both by definition and in practice links it strongly to structuralism and semiotics, has indeed provided it with a powerful tool, but its current use seems to us to be below the capacities of the tool. Both new anthropology and postmodernism analyze meaning in a general, impressionistic and frequently unconvincing, not to say arbitrary, way, forgetting that in actual cultural settings the ‘free-play’ of meaning is much more limited than the abstract theory would like us to believe (cf. Mascia-Lees *et al.* 1989: 27). In the name of the rejection of positivism, we ignore the important theoretical insights, and the systematic methods and techniques for the analysis of meaning, offered by structuralism and semiotics, as well as the impressive development of semantics.

This is the reason why we thought it useful to bring back into the postmodern discussion certain concepts derived from the above anthropological paradigm, too easily and indiscriminately dismissed by the postmodern wave, i.e., to proceed according to a ‘back-to-the-future’ scheme. Needless to say, our aim is not a return to rigid structuralist principles, but to integrate useful structuralist tools with what is useful in a postmodern perspective. In doing so, and for purposes of

argument, we have stressed the structuralist concepts and the concepts bridging structuralism with neostructuralism and postmodernism, rather than the post-modern ones.

Among the concepts of not only structuralism but also earlier anthropological paradigms, we believe that the one of classification system is of crucial importance. The classification system is essential for the structuring of signification, i.e., semiotic, systems, and the concept of classification system is essential for their understanding and interpretation. Its centrality for the comprehension of the cultural-semiotic sphere has been repeatedly emphasized by anthropological research, from the classic essay by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss *De quelques formes primitives de classification* (1903) to the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss and beyond.

Lévi-Strauss (1958: 98, 321–322, 347–348, 366) conceives society as being structured according to a series of ‘levels’ or ‘orders’. There are social, ‘lived’, ‘infrastructural’ orders – such as the kinship system or social organization – which derive from ‘objective reality’ (by which Lévi-Strauss means unconscious mental processes) and can be studied from the outside, independently of how they are conceived on the part of the social subjects; and orders that are mental, ‘conceived’ and ‘superstructural’ – such as language, myth, religion, ritual, law or art – which do not derive directly from reality but are indispensable for the understanding of the lived orders. For Lévi-Strauss, there are relations between the structures of these two types of orders, which however are not necessarily relations of homology; it is possible that the structures may be dialectically related by transformations, or even be contradictory. There are also spatial orders, animated by the previous orders, among which some are stable, such as settlements; some are unstable, such as dances; and the rest are halfway between the two, such as the spatial arrangement of furniture.

We shall focus in this paper on the articulation of Lévi-Strauss’ mental orders mainly with settlement space, but we should clarify two points. First, we shall not turn to the whole set of these orders, but only to the intellectual, and emotional, system included in the mythical-religious and legal orders. Second, we consider it more appropriate to use the concept of *semantic code* together with that of order. While there are very broad definitions of the concept of code (*langue* is a code), we understand it as analogous to the ‘partial semantic code’ and very close to the concept of ‘isotopy’, both discussed by Algirdas Julien Greimas and Joseph

Courtés (1979: 39, 197–198). More specifically, we consider it useful to define code as a structured set of sememes (the particular signification of a word) or of sets of sememes, all of which have at least one common seme and which constitute a matrix categorizing reality; the structure of the matrix derives from specific rules governing their relations. This set follows from a specific perspective on the world, or otherwise a certain relevancy in respect to the cultural semiotic universe.

One disadvantage with Lévi-Strauss' orders is that they are defined in a universal, empirical and incomplete manner. Also, it is clear that one and the same order follows from the articulation of several semantic codes (for example, the religious order may include a religious code, a cosmic code, a social code, a mineral code, etc.), while the same code appears in different orders (for example, the cosmic code appears in the religious order, the social order, the 'artistic' order, the settlement order, etc.). Thus, the code is a finer unit of analysis. It is also culture-specific, and the culture-specific combination and structuring of codes delivers the semiotic orders of a society. It is the whole of the internal structure of each code and of the structured relations between codes that constitutes the classification system.

The world view is the essential part of a society's cognitive and emotional culture and is regulated by this narrower classification system and its structuring principles. A system of classification is not homogeneous, but has a nucleus, a central part, and a periphery: a certain code or codes are dominant, certain other codes are closely related to them, while the other codes are determined by and of lesser importance than the former. Determination can be either a formal relation or a function of the cultural value placed on the semantic content covered by a code. When its determining position is due to the content of a code, it may rest with only certain parts of the code. Determination establishes value hierarchies between codes. There are also taxonomical hierarchies between codes, deriving from the cultural relations between their relevancies. Another type of relations between codes derives from their similarity. The latter may refer to the formal characteristics of the codes, such as isomorphy, or to their content, in which case one code functions as a metaphor for another.

There is a close relation between the concept of the nucleus of a classification system and Michel Foucault's (1966: 12–13, 170–171) concept of *épistémè*. Foucault is not analytical in the theoretical presentation of this concept, with

which he wants to indicate the epistemological field, historically delimited, which includes the fundamental preconditions of knowledge of a period. For him, these preconditions detach from experience a possible domain of knowledge, set the context in which a discourse recognized as true can evolve, define the mode of being of the objects constituting the above domain and offer the possible theoretical viewpoints. Thus, *épistémè* is very close to both the nucleus of the classification system – that is, the nature of its codes, their internal structure, and the ordered relations between them – and the preconditions for its emergence.² We should not, however, reify either *épistémè* or classification systems, because, in spite of their actual operation in cultures, they are abstractions, which are manifested in practice with greater or lesser fidelity (cf. Giddens 1981: 26).

Our interest in this paper is not in the classification system *per se*, but in the manner in which the cultural codes are articulated with space through the mediation of cultural practices. The study of space is present from very early on in the anthropological literature, but structuralism offered the most integrated theoretical approach to the symbolic analysis of space – one of the factors that led to the constitution of the anthropology of space as a distinct subfield of anthropology. This fact is also recognized by Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low (1990: 467; see also 491) in their thorough review of the approaches to built space in the social sciences. In the same paper, these authors locate two major areas of investigation in respect to space.

The first, which is of primary importance according to Lawrence and Low, is the social production of space; studies in this area examine the impact of social, economic, and political forces on space in the theoretical context of political economy. The second area concerns the processes leading to building decisions, as well as the meaning of built space. Quite rightly, in our opinion, the authors per-

² *Épistémè* largely belongs to a collective scientific unconscious and the comparison to the classification system which we effect here reminds us that there are different degrees of (un)consciousness. The preconditions for the emergence of the system are fully unconscious and their causes, which Foucault rejects as non-pertinent, are a matter of material historical interpretation. The nature and relations of codes are closer to the possible inspection of consciousness, but their use in practice is unreflected. Finally, while the reasons for the internal structure of the codes must be sought in the preconditions of the system and are thus unconscious, their structure is in its general lines accessible to consciousness. From a certain point of view, the concept of the classification system is larger than that of *épistémè* in that it includes not only the cognitive, but also extends to the emotional domain.

ceive the need to integrate these two areas (Lawrence, Low 1990: 482, 491–493; see also Low 1996: 402; Moore 1986: e.g. 4–5, 87). A comparable argument has been made by one of the present authors (Lagopoulos 1985: 261), who observes that urban space is produced by, and also influences, three interrelated processes: a socioeconomic process, which is fundamental for the constitution of space; a political process, including state planning; and an ideological process, deriving in its main lines from the first process, which also comprises the symbolic production of space. There is no doubt that the integration of the symbolic approach with the political economy approach delivers the most holistic kind of study. Nevertheless, we shall confine ourselves here for practical reasons to the semiotic dimension, that is, to space viewed as a cultural text. A second limitation is that our material, historical for the most, offers no data for the study either of the cultural universe of distinct collective actors or of probable cultural constructs in tension with the hegemonic spatial model studied by us.

One of the interesting observations made by Lawrence and Low (1990: 459, 493) concerns the value that architectural know-how can have for anthropological research. In fact, anthropology of space demands from the anthropologist a training in spatial matters and a vocabulary for the analysis of architectural and urban organization and form. In this study we try to combine the architectural and geographical tools of spatial analysis with an anthropological perspective on the material, and to pay due attention to the data concerning both the location of specific persons, groups, spatial elements and uses, and the exact geometrical organization and form of spatial configurations.

The Amhara and the *Ser'ata Mangest*

Our study of the cultural world integrated into the Ethiopian military camp is heavily based on an Amhara legal document, the *Ser'ata Mangest*. *Ser'ata Mangest*, or *The Order of the Kingdom*,³ has been called the first Ethiopian constitution: 'a real constitution, certainly the oldest Ethiopian one' (Tafla, Scholler 1976: 487). The Amhara speak a language, *amarinya*, belonging to the South Ethio-Semitic group (Levine 1974: 30). Under the Solomonid dynasty, especially during

³ For the purpose of this article we use the English translation of *Ser'ata Mangest* by Bairu Tafla and Heinrich Scholler (1976), as well as the transliteration of the Ethiopian terms which these authors suggest.

the reign of Amda Sion (1314–1344), they gained control over a large area of the Abyssinian plateau and founded the so-called Kingdom of Shoa (1270–1543).⁴ The era of the Kingdom of Shoa is a period in which Ethiopia attained power and glory. The economy was based on farming, commerce, and handicraft, these three sectors of the economy being more or less attached respectively to the three main, religiously distinct groups of the Amhara (Christians), the Arabs and Persians (Muslims), and the Falasha (the tribe of African Black Jews). The main agricultural products were cereals, fruits, and vegetables, and the very rich soil and temperate climate allowed for two harvests per year. European travellers also report great irrigation works (Westphal 1975: 68–73).

The social stratification corresponded to the division of labor and ethnicity. The Amhara kept the power and the land, the distribution of which was made by the emperor according to the military prowess of his men. The Amhara were soldiers, cultivators and administrators, and their titles and offices were granted solely by the emperor and were usually accompanied by great donations of land. There followed the Arabs and Persians, who were mainly merchants and textile workers. The Falasha did not possess any land rights whatsoever and were metal forgers, making tools and utensils, as well as different items of jewellery. This society offers many resemblances with the great empires which flourished in the ancient Near and Middle East, and may be considered as an autocratic society or, in Marxist terms, as a society belonging to the Asiatic mode of production (Stylianoudi 1984: 381–384). The establishment of the permanent capital of Gondar in the first half of the seventeenth century corresponds to a turning point in the history of Ethiopia, as this permanent capital is related to the transformation of the mode of production into feudalism, many elements of which were in place till the days of the last emperor Haile Selassie.

By order of the emperor Amda Sion, chronicles were written, and genealogies were revised and constructed or reconstructed, so that the unity of the empire and the power of the dynasty should be legitimized. Thus, the basic elements of the *Ser'ata Mangest* were already in place in the early fourteenth century 'and record a continuous legislative activity' which culminated in the seventeenth century (Vanderlinden 1966: 39). The text was rewritten, or at least modified, during the reigns of various emperors. As the *Ser'ata Mangest* states in its introduction

⁴ We follow the periodization of Ethiopian history proposed by Tubiana (1966).

(*Praeambulum*): ‘This is a book of the Kings and of the Lords (judges), that is of many things including history, tradition and the list of the hierarchy’. *Ser’ata Mangest*, in its greatest extent a protocol of ceremonies of state and church and of the administration of justice to be consulted when needed, played an important role in the political life of the royal court and the administration of justice, and was an important factor of adult life and male identity in Amhara society. As a written document it is the product of a literate traditional society, the kind of society in which ‘there is a strong association between writing and religion’ (Goody 1981: 14) and where ‘the writing down of sacred lore [is] undertaken to ‘freeze’ a tradition, not to adapt and adjust it to reality’ (Oppenheim, quoted in Goody 1981: 15). Traditional Amhara society appears to belong to the category of the precapitalist empires, where writing has uses similar to those in Mesopotamia, namely administration, the codification of law, the formulation of a sacred tradition, the recording of annals, and eventually scholarly purposes (Goody 1981: 21).

Amda Sion’s reconstruction included the rehandling of the Amhara myth of origin (cf. in general Stylianoudi 1984: 181, 185–186, 193–195; Stylianoudi 1996), the myth of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. *Ser’ata Mangest* continues (in *Fides Historica*) with the invocation of this myth, establishing thus the inviolability of its authority: ‘These laws and regulations came forth from Jerusalem with the son of Solomon, whose name was Menelik.⁵ With him came twelve students of law’. According to this myth, Menelik, the founding hero of the Amhara and mirror-image of Solomon (*Men’y’lek*, in Ethiopian, ‘to whom he resembles?’), accompanied by twelve students of law, i.e., twelve judges, firstborn sons of the twelve aristocratic families of the court of Solomon, stole the Ark of the Covenant from Israel and, flying miraculously over land and sea, arrived in Ethiopia and founded the Ethiopian empire. The divinity of the Ethiopian ruler was thus established through his ancestry: by being a descendant of the line of Solomon, the Ethiopian emperor became affiliated to the line of David and hence to Jesus Christ. It is worth noting the correspondence between, on the one hand the twelve legendary descendants of the noble families surrounding Solomon that came to Ethiopia and became founders of the twelve Ethiopian tribes, and along with Menelik co-founders of the state, and on the other, the twelve

⁵ Pankhurst refers to this hero as ‘Menilek’. We use the more familiar English version of the name.

profane tribes of Israel with the thirteenth, the tribe of Levi, and Christ with his twelve disciples (Mekouria 1966: 12).

The royal camp and the spatial model in *Ser'ata Mangest*

Structuralism was justly criticized for reifying structures, with the result that it lost sight of the social and cultural practices creating them and absorbing changes within them, and thus tended to consider so-called primitive societies as somehow outside of history, changeless, 'cold'. These practices constitute the cornerstone of Anthony Giddens's (1981: 15–16, 19, 26–28) theory of structuration. However, just as to criticize reification of structures does not imply that they do not exist, so the theory of structuration emphasizes the active role of structures. For this theory, social practices use as medium and produce or reproduce the structural properties of institutions involved in social dynamics which are connected to large-scale social processes and to macro-time. The virtuality of change is inherent in social dynamics. This is also the main point of Pierre Bourdieu (1980, for example: 88–96, 101–102). Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus* to link social actor and structure. *Habitus* allows the incorporation and actual use of structures in social practices. It is the historically defined system of durable dispositions which comes into existence by the interiorization of structures. Thus, it is structured by structures and its tendency is to secure the stability of practices over time. Structures preside over *habitus* and practices, but not on the basis of a mechanical determinism; they impose limits on the inventiveness of *habitus*. There is no mechanical determinism, because structures are reactivated and filtered by *habitus* and subject to its specific logic. *Habitus* generates revisions and transformations, and thus also structures the structures. Thus, Giddens and Bourdieu bring into the foreground the dialectics between practice and structure. The result is change, which may of course be fast, but it may also be slow, even extend over centuries.

As we shall see, the spatial practices concerning the creation of the Amhara royal camp belong to this latter case. In 1681, about three and a half centuries after the compilation of *Ser'ata Mangest*, Ludolf (see *Historia*, lib. II: cap. 13, 1–7, quoted in Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 267, fn. 4; Pankhurst 1961: 140) describes a royal camp, the structure of which is quite similar to the one prescribed in that text. He also gives us an idea of the practices leading to the camp's structure, which were regularly repeated and in all likelihood very similar to those at

the time of Amda Sion. Such frequent practices belong with what Giddens calls the temporality of the day-to-day life-world, which for him is connected to the *longue durée* of the structural world of institutions:

The Fitawrari [a prefect] goes ahead in search of a suitable site ...; he sets up a tall pole bearing the King's flag, on seeing which the surveyors of the high officials measure the place and pitch the tents of their masters. After them come the rest of the army, and those who for whatever reason accompany it. So, in a few hours there is an ordered camp where a little before there was nothing to be seen. For each man knows how and where to pitch his tent, since the order of the camp is always the same: there are always the same streets and byways, the same open spaces and *insulae*. And when the time comes to leave, all know the precise order in which to pack up and set forth... When the Cryer has once proclaimed the day of removal, they presently know how to pack up their baggage, and in what order to march without any more ado; who are to march in the Front, who in the Rear, who on the Right, who on the Left. (Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 267, fn. 4)

The royal camp (within national territory; there are minor variations when in foreign territory) is described in a condensed manner in *Ser'ata Mangest* in chapter III, 'Traditions and Regulations', and in article 21, 'Tradition on the Camping of the King in his Journey'; article 22, 'The Order of Camping at the Right Side', and article 23, 'Tradition and Order of the King's Palace'. On the basis of this information, the traditional model of the royal camp can be represented by the plan of Figure 1. The major structural elements of the camp according to the *Ser'ata Mangest* are the following:

- (a) A *central* element identified with the royal (the king's) palace (P).
- (b) An *opposition* between *in front* (the king, 1) and *behind* (the queen, 2), the king being at the same time in the center.
- (c) An *opposition* between two halves, the one *left* (*gerra*, see a) and the other *right* (*kegne*, see b).
- (d) A *main axis* (XX) separating these two halves. This axis is materialized on the ground as a wide road located *behind* the king.
- (e) A *notional axis* (YY) perpendicular to the main axis, suggested by the division between front and rear. This axis would be *secondary* and together with the main axis forms a *cross*.
- (f) A *tripartite* concentric organization of the camp, composed of the central royal (king's) compound (I); an inner zone around it (II) delimited on its left by an enclosure *Gerra-Feres Deharawi* (a), and on its right by the symmetrical

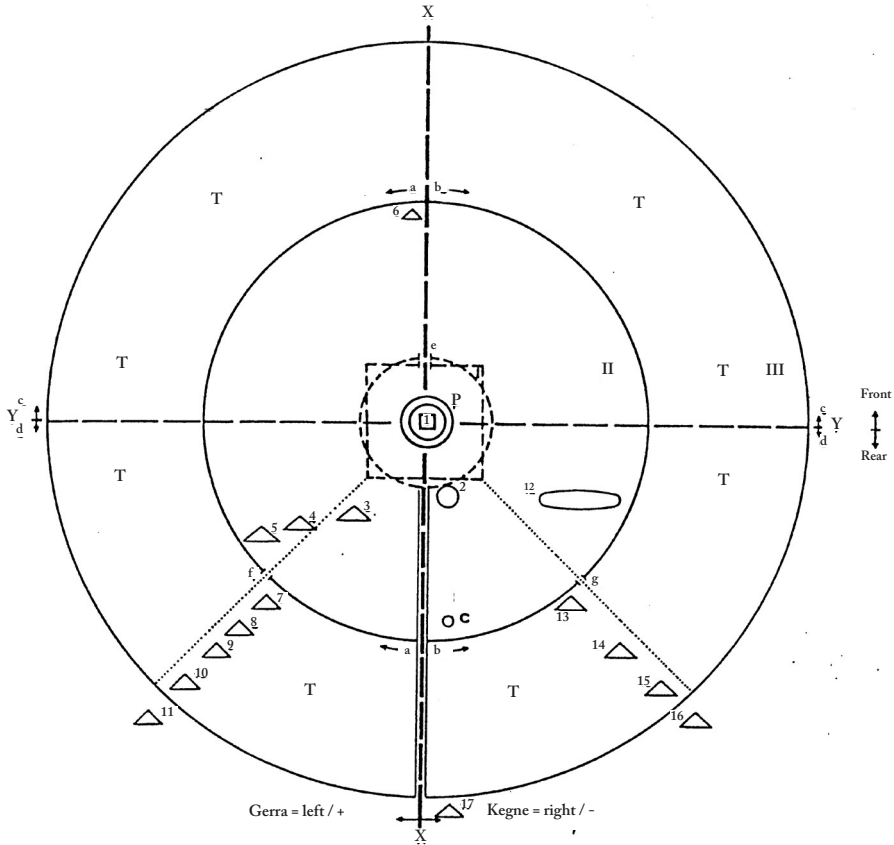


Figure 1] The organization of the military camp based on the *Ser'ata Mangest*.

1. King. 2. Queen. 3. *Blatten Gettas* (the two Masters of the Pages, both of superior and inferior rank). 4. *Bejerond* (treasurer and chamberlain; there are two, one of the House of the Throne and one of the House of the Lion) and *Teresmba Demasash* (unknown group of functionaries). 5. Pashas and Lords. 6. *Rak Massare* (Master of Ceremonies) and *Derebba Bet* (House of the Pages). 7. *Gerra Azmatch* (the military officer in charge of the left wing of the army) and the *Gerra Kurban* (left branch of the army). 8. *Bitwoded* of Begemder and the people of Begemder. 9. *Aysenifo Demasash* (the servants in charge of the stables). 10. *Balambaras* (colonel, the Master of the Horse). 11. *Azzajotch* (the Judges of religious rank, assessors) and *Likawant* (the Great Judges, measurers) of the left. 12. Ladies and Princesses. 13. *Kegne Azmatch* and *Kegne Kurban* (counterpart of 7). 14. *Bitwoded* of Gojam. 15. Children of Abetohun Yonael of the emperor Melak Seged. 16. *Azzajotch* and *Likawant* of the right (counterpart of 11). 17. *Fitawrari* (the general of the vanguard). P. Palace. I. King's compound. II. Inner zone of the camp. III. Outer zone. XX. Main axis. YY. Secondary notional axis. a. *Gerra Feres Deharawi*. b. *Kegne Feres Deharawi*. c. *Darhinda Feres*. d. *Fit Feres*. e. Central gate. f. *Gerra Kulf*. g. *Kegne Kulf*. C. Church. T. Tents.

Kegne-Feres Deharawi (b); and an outer zone (III) ending in front with the enclosure of the camp named *Darhinda Feres* (c) and to the rear with the

symmetrical *Fit Feres* (d). This concentric form is further emphasized by the narrative sequence of the description of the camp.

- (g) One *principal gate* in front of the king and on the limit of his compound (e). Mention is made of two secondary gates at his rear, *Gerra Kulf* to his left (f) and *Kegne Kulf* to his right (g), which were situated between the inner and the outer zone and were probably symmetrical. The three gates may have formed an almost equilateral triangle and were perhaps located on the bisectors of the two perpendicular axes, on which were also stationed dignitaries and troops.

There were manifestly also other gates, such as the ones connected to the road on the main axis. There were people assigned to guarding the two secondary gates mentioned (the Keepers or Guardians of the Gates or Doors) and special troops encamped there: the *Gerra Azmatch* with the *Gerra Kurban* (7) and the *Kegne Azmatch* with the *Kegne Kurban* (13) – entailing a military semantic code in the conception of the camp. The gates of the king's compound, the inner zone, and the outer zone were all in fences made of cloth, or wood in case of a longer period of camping. This is also confirmed by various travellers who have visited Ethiopia in more recent times, as for instance by the Scottish traveller Bruce (1813, see Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 262, fn. 2), who describes a barrier which was set up to keep clear the open space around the king's tent.

These elements are shown in the plan of Figure 1, which also shows the location of other dignitaries, as well as that of the queen (2) and the soldiers (T). The queen's compound constitutes a marked place. This queen is the senior queen, the Queen Mother (*Tallakitu Negest* 'The Great Queen'), who usually is also Queen of the Right.⁶ She is not necessarily the king's mother, but may be the previous king's wife, whom the new king would marry according to custom. As seen in Figure 1 she is also spatially related to both the central elements and the right. Both articles 21 and 22 in *Ser'ata Mangest* start with the queen as the point of reference of the spatial division into right and left of the camp. We read in article

⁶ There is some controversy on this matter. We follow here Mekouria (1966) and Beckingham and Huntingford (1961). Tamrat (1972: 271–272), referring to the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first of the sixteenth, does not relate the queen mother with any direction. He correctly mentions two more queens, one of the left, *Gerra Bealtibat*, and one of the right, *Kegne Bealtibat*. The two queens were patrons of the left and the right respectively and kept separate palaces. Tamrat adds a junior queen of the right, *Bealte Shihna*. Mekouria (1966: 165) mentions that Amda Sion had two queens: *Tallakitu Negest* (the Great Queen) and *Tanakitu Negest* (the Little Queen). Zara Yacob had two queens as well, the queen-patron of the left and the queen-

21: 'The Queen would camp *behind* him [the king] opposite the mergef, a little farther from the camp, and on her *left* side lay a wide road [on the main axis]. Then the major and minor [here follow the titles of different dignitaries] ... respectively would camp...'; and in article 22: 'On the *right* side of the Queen up to the Kegne-Feres Deharawi the Ladies and the Melmel (princes) [see 12] would camp' (emphasis added).

On the basis of Ludolf's description of the royal camp, it is clear that the Fitawrari (general of the vanguard) plants the royal standard marking the place of the king's compound in the middle of the camp. We may assume that the standard was erected on the highest point in the vicinity, given that the word *katama*, designating the royal camp, in addition to 'permanent camp' and 'fortification' also means 'summit', from which the former meanings are derived; this point is also corroborated by Alvares, who states that 'the Prester's tents are pitched on the highest ground of the plain, if there is any' (Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 192, fn. 2, 267, fn. 4, 437).

Following the planting of the royal standard, the surveyors take their measurements and locate the sites of the tents. The point of reference for measurements is the king's standard, a fact emphasizing the centrality of the king (political and more specifically royal code). On the other hand, the attribute of centrality is also related to the queen, to the extent that she is used as the point of reference for the left-right division, which however according to the above analysis emanates structurally from the king. We may conclude on the basis of these data that the center defined by the queen is a 'shadow' image of that created by the king. That the two of them are of comparable, and sacred (religious code), nature can also be seen from the fact that only the king and queen, together with the churches, were allowed to use white tents (Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 272, fn. 1), a detail which introduces a chromatic code.

In discussing the king's compound in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first of the sixteenth, Tamrat writes that the Ethiopian texts do not comprise (astronomical) directions. He speculates that this is due to the lack of any

patron of the right. Mekouria also mentions a third queen, *Ras Gezite* or *Ireshe Gezite* ('The One Who Dominates the Ras'). Starting from the reign of the emperor Naod (1485–1508) polygamy disappeared, and the titles of the queens of the right and left were abandoned in the seventeenth century around the time of Fasiladas and the foundation of Gondar as permanent capital. Since then there is only one queen, called *Ite* or *Ittege*, 'Sister of the Land', a title which seems to be the diminutive of *Igzetye* or *Igzei Tege*, 'Mistress (Patron) of the Land' (Mekouria 1966: 167, 171).

strict rule for orientation, and that the particular topographical features of each site may have dictated the orientation of the compound. He follows, however, 'for reasons of clarity', Father Francisco Alvares (see below) who situates the principal gate to the 'west' (Tamrat 1972: 269). We should recall that according to the *Ser'ata Mangest* the principal gate is located on the line of sight of the king, which also establishes the main direction of the camp. It is possible that the direction given by Alvares may be less arbitrary than it seems. One reason is that, when the camp is on the march, the king is supposed to always move *westwards*. Henry Salt writes that south is associated with left and north with right, associations that lead to the coupling of west with front and of east with rear. In this manner the main axis of the camp would be oriented E to W (from rear to front) and the marked direction would be from the center to the west. However, the set of cardinal points does not seem to have had a marked semantic presence, and even in today's Ethiopia they are rarely used (Levine 1965: 74), although the course of the sun (solar-astral code) seems to have been important in official contexts.

King, metaphor, and dualism

To sum up the main attributes of the king in relation to space: he is the point of reference for the first major semantic pair appearing in article 21 *front* vs. *rear*, (a semantic pair referring both to an anthropomorphic and to a spatial code), since the queen is the first to camp *behind* him; he is in the center (in fact he *is* the center); he defines a dominant visual axis directed from the center outwards; and he is at the summit: he is in heaven, above earth (elements belonging to a cosmic code), his feet never touching the ground; but in the last analysis he is beyond space and, as we shall see, beyond left and right. The dualism of *left* vs. *right* (anthropomorphic-spatial code) follows from the king, as we shall see, but it is materialized (according to articles 21 and 22) in the senior queen, who is below, on earth. If we accept that the senior queen is also connected to the right, then we may assume that the left-right dichotomy corresponds to a *male* vs. *female* opposition (anthropomorphic code and more specifically a code of gender and sex), marking the camp as gendered. The status of the queen mother finds its interpretation in the myth of Menelik and his queen mother, who abdicated her throne (and renounced her virginity) on his behalf, thus marking the transition between and the merging of two dynasties and two kinship systems (Stylianoudi 1984: 144).

Gendered space is a very widespread phenomenon, not only on the level of signification but also as connected to social practices; the valorization of the male aspect is the rule. The importance, however, of this code/aspect of space may vary. For example, Henrietta L. Moore (1986: 21–22, 26, 45–49, 102–116, 120–121, 162–163, 167–170, 186, 188) in her study of the Endo, belonging to the Markwet tribe of West Kenya, describes their ideal, and typical, compound, which accompanies the most productive phase of the individual household. The compound is organized around a N–S axis, and when there are two huts in the compound they are located facing each other and thus not east, which is considered an inauspicious orientation. A different activity takes place within each hut – the one is for sleeping and entertaining, and the other for cooking – and the huts have a gender affiliation, since the former is male and the latter, including the hearth, female. Male is associated with right and female with left, but the male hut can be either to the north or to the south, something showing that right and left are not absolute but relative positions. Three kinds of rubbish are semantically distinguished; they are associated with the male–female division, and placed outside the compound in such a manner that they correspond respectively to the male and female huts. Burials also (theoretically) follow the same division.

Moore observes that the distinction between genders constitutes the basis for the organization of this household unit. She further observes that, beyond and above the functional distinctions associated to the genders, the reference is to a value system opposing ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’, and expressing the actual conflicts and complementarity between genders. This opposition is the locus for the expression of other conflicts within society and an opening for thinking about the world. The working of this model is not symmetrical but supports male domination. Maleness is associated with notions such as ‘clan allegiance’, ‘big’, ‘sky’, ‘up’, ‘permanent’, and femaleness with their opposites: ‘individualism’, ‘small’, ‘earth’, ‘down’, ‘temporary’. For the Endo, the whole of the community is involved in the maintenance of the balance of the world, but men consider themselves as the eminently social beings mainly responsible for this task. It is this structural hierarchy of values, corresponding to the dominant male view of the world, which is naturalized and expressed by the compound.

There are resemblances between the Endo and the Amhara classification systems, but also a crucial difference. The economy of the Endo had until very recently a fundamentally traditional form and the traditional political ideal of

the Marakwet tribe was equality among the elders. In the nineteenth century, the Marakwet had no chiefs, and this is almost the case today, although pressures are exerted by their greater exposure to the global economy. Within this socio-economic framework, the *male* vs. *female* division arises as dominant. The Amhara society on the other hand was stratified and had a ruling class and a court. The highest point of the social hierarchy is occupied by the king, who, metaphorically speaking, is the center and the summit of society. These metaphors acquire for the Amhara cosmic dimensions and place the male king above the female queen. The same hierarchy is established between male and female as in the Endo case, only that in the Amhara's autocratic society, the code of gender and sex is appropriated by the royal code, which, as we shall see in the last section, ultimately establishes itself as the opening for thinking about the world.

The queen mother has the attributes of the Queen of Sheba, who is the Queen of the South, thus marking the rear not only as female but as south as well. South belongs to the mythical queen (Makeda or Bilkis, the Amhara name for the queen of Sheba), so north should belong to the mythical king, Menelik/Solomon, the founder of the dynasty (Stylianoudi 1984: 140, 142). Thus to the opposition *front* vs. *rear*, defined by the king and the queen, corresponds also the opposition *north* vs. *south*. The corresponding royal spaces are both divine. With this division another structure, *north* vs. *south*, is superimposed on the *west* vs. *east* structure of the camp, both belonging to the solar aspect of an astral code, itself part of the cosmic code.

We may make certain complementary observations on the above model of the royal camp. It contains three major central elements. The marked element *par excellence* is the qualitative center defined by the king; this is from an observer's point of view the geometrical center of the camp, a view probably also shared by the Amhara on the denotative level. But the connotation – the metaphorical significance – of the center projects the king beyond human, earthly space. As a function of this center, two other marked elements are defined. The first is a visual axis starting from the king. Was this line of sight conceived of as oriented? There are three possibilities: (a) it did not point anywhere in particular if the placement of the camp resulted simply from an adaptation to local topography, in which case the line of sight of the king is self-referential; (b) it pointed in the direction of the enemy, as Ludolf states; and (c) it aimed at an astronomical point, west, the point of the setting sun, which is inseparable from the portion of space in

front of the king. Cases b and c are not exclusive, and case c should represent the ritual requirement.

The second marked element defined by the king, which is also the second major central element, is in the opposite direction and is the location of the queen mother; it is behind the king and inseparable from the remaining portion of space, behind the king. The positions of the king and the queen, the persons marking the royal code, seem to replicate the dualism of this couple, since they form two centers with opposed qualities. The center defined by the king is not actually on earth; it is divine and belongs to heavenly space, but it nevertheless encounters the earth; it is the immobile heavenly zero point of cosmic space. In contrast, the center defined by the queen is located on earth. The location of the king and the queen together with the visual axis of the king compose an axis, the main axis of the camp, which is the third major central element and comprises two segments: the marked segment is visual, its direction is from the king-center outwards, and it is notional, that is, it is not materialized in actual space; while the unmarked segment uniting the marked center with the unmarked east is located behind the king and materialized as the main road of the camp.

The opposition *left vs. right*, having as direct point of reference the queen, is defined according to the same visual axis that relates to the king. Being a structure of space in general, it also characterizes the space on both sides of the central element, the royal palace. The superimposition on this structure of the *front vs. rear* structure delivers both the general horizontal Amhara model of space and the model of the royal camp. At least when seen by an outside observer, this model is quadripartite. Ludolf also states (in the chapter already cited) that the royal camp he saw was divided into four parts, each headed by a prefect. It is anchored in the human body (and thus the Amhara case would accord with phenomenological views on spatial orientation), but it may be dependent also on a point in the course of the sun, the west. The horizontal model is complemented by a vertical axis passing through its center and connected to the king, given that the king is above the earth and related to a summit. This location of the king connotes the vertical axis of the cosmos. The cosmic axis is defined by the summit and the center-king, an extension of which is the center-queen.

The preceding analysis shows us that the actual royal camp supported a signification system. It was not, however, a static and abstract system, just lying on the ground and signifying. It was created by a dynamic communication circuit. The

camp had an owner, the king, who was also manifestly considered as the Sender of the 'urban' text/message. There was, however, a hierarchy of Senders. Above the king there was another Sender, since the text was a repetition and enactment of imperatives handed down by tradition, belonging to the mythical-religious sphere; this is the ultimate Sender. Below the king were the surveyors, who undertook the specialized technical part of the spatial writing of the text, and thus set the structural lines of the sanctioned prototype. There was also a hierarchy of Receivers. There were the direct Receivers, the officials, the soldiers, and the people following the king, but also the rest of the country, that functioned as indirect Receivers. The direct Receivers, however, were simultaneously situated at the other end of the communication circuit. Being locally responsible for the practicalities of their installation, they were also mentally and sentimentally involved in the realization of the prototype.

We recognize here the pattern of the ritual performances, as described by Edmund Leach (1976: 43, 45). He refers to the 'composer' of the rite, i.e., the mythical ancestor – who is thus the ultimate Sender of the message. Then come the actual performers, among whom there is a 'conductor', a master of ceremonies or a chief priest. As to the rest of the performers, they are also the listeners/Receivers. Participation in a ritual implies, for Leach, the transmission of collective messages to ourselves.

A basic semiotic mechanism for the construction of any text is connotation, as shown for example by the cosmic attributes of the king and his central location. In all these cases, in which elements of or within the camp refer to something other than themselves, we find the operation of one aspect of connotation, namely metaphor, as the element referred to becomes a metaphorical significance of the referring element. Thus, metaphor is created by associating elements belonging to different codes, through a conceived similarity. These associations lead to relational networks that run through different parts of the classification system and relate to the isomorphic tendencies of the codes, which may be partially or totally isomorphic. This tight relational logic characterizes not only the Amhara classification system but also all precapitalist societies. It is through it that settlement space can both mirror culture and participate in its becoming.

If we examine the internal organization of the Amhara codes, what is striking is their dualist structure. Usually this dualism is subsumed into a ternary structure, the middle term of which is the marked element (there is also another

variant of the dualist structure, to which we shall return in the last section). It is well known that structuralism was strongly criticized on the grounds that it reduced all cultural phenomena to binary oppositions, and in fact structuralists did have the habit of seeing dualist structures everywhere, frequently imposing them on the cultures studied. Nevertheless, this excessive use of dualism as a scientific practice should not blur the fact that dualism is a common way of structuring codes in precapitalist societies. The Amhara culture is animated by dualist thinking, something made quite explicit in the text of the *Ser'ata Mangest*, which perceives all institutions (with the exception of the king) in dualist terms: a queen of the left and a queen of the right, dignitaries of Church, Law and State of the left and of the right, etc.

The camp in history

There is an earlier account than Ludolf's of the royal camp. We find it in Father Francisco Alvares' *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia*, which appeared in 1520. Alvares' description (see Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 437, 439, 441–444), as the one by Ludolf, confirms that the prescriptions of the *Ser'ata Mangest* were followed with fidelity. Between these two descriptions an important socioeconomic and urban event took place: the camp became permanent.⁷ Until around 1550, the king was moving constantly, but his camp was far from being a mediocre settlement. It served as the capital, included the court, had the functions of a permanent city, and around it were assembled large crowds of subjects (Tamrat 1972: 274). Alvares relates that the camp he saw included 5,000–6,000 tents; the enclosure of the palace alone was 'half a league round' (2.5 km).

The cultural model presiding over the royal camps is encountered also in the spatial organization of Ethiopian towns. Frequently the central parts of Ethiopian towns have their origin in military camps (Pankhurst 1966: 113). This was the case with both Gondar and Addis Ababa (founded around 1890). Gondar was dominated by the castle of the emperor Fasiladas, and most of the houses in the city in the mid-seventeenth century were huts. The city was divided into a

⁷ The first fixed capital was established by the emperor Galawdewos (1540–1559) and his example was followed by Sartsa Dengel (1563–1597), who also built at Guzara, east of lake Tana, a castle which Pankhurst considers as the precursor of the capital of Gondar. The latter was built by Fasiladas (1632–1667) at the beginning of his reign and is the landmark of the permanent Ethiopian capitals (Pankhurst 1961: 141–142, 149).

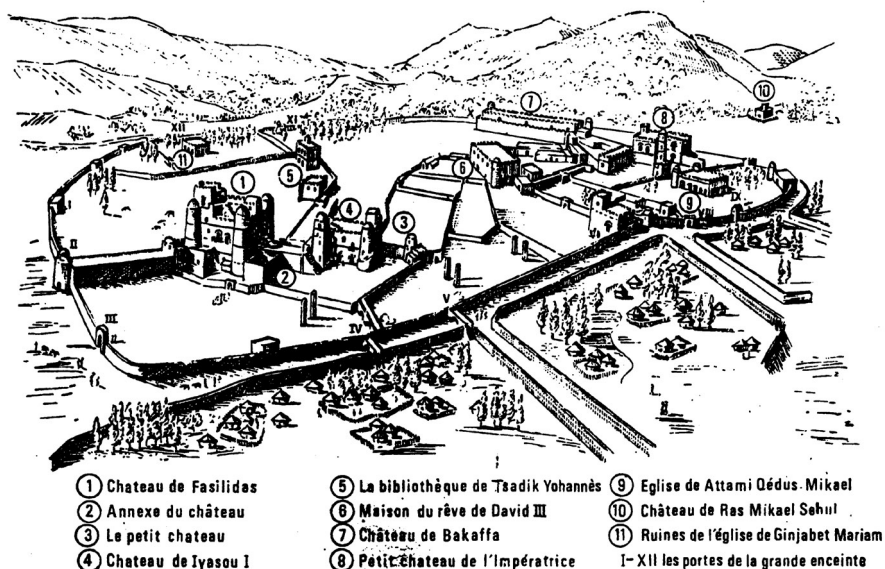


Figure 2] The royal city of Gondar (P. and M. Deribéré 1972).

left and a right quarter, and at the end of the seventeenth century had a circumference of three to four leagues (15–20 km). The palace (Fig. 2) was located in the middle of the city on a rise and was surrounded by a stone wall with towers, the circumference of which was almost a league long. These numbers give us a diameter for Gondar of about 5–6.5 km and for the king's compound of about 1.5 km (Pankhurst 1961: 149–153).

The range of the model is even more far-reaching. We learn from descriptions of travellers that the prototype of the royal camp was strictly replicated in the courts of lesser dignitaries. In fact, it presided with minor variations over the organization and form of all types and scales of military camps, down to the most modest one (cf. Pankhurst 1966: 110–113). It is to be noted, however, that this model had to be adapted each time to spatial circumstances, among which were topographical hazards. The continuing cultural life of the model, which manifestly precedes the compilation of the *Ser'ata Mangest* though we do not know its actual age, is also attested by the account of Arnaud d'Abbadie just before the middle of the nineteenth century, who describes the rather modest camp of Dejatch Guosho, a dignitary of the province of Gojam in western Ethiopia. Our information about the camp of Menelik II at the battle of Aduwa in 1896 (see

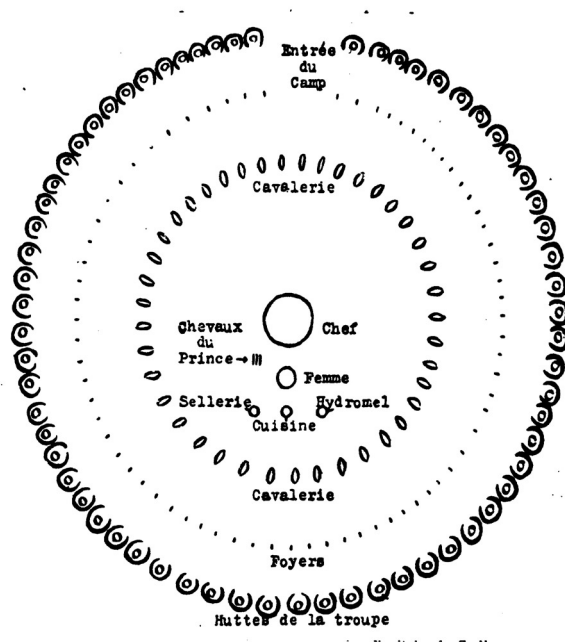


Figure 3] Camp of Dejatch Guosho, mid-nineteenth century, according to Griaule (1934a).

Pankhurst 1966: 111) indicates that it followed the same general model. We shall discuss these two camps below.

Griaule (1934a: 120) gives us a plan of Dejatch Guosho's camp based on the description by d'Abbadie (Fig. 3). The camp has a simple organization. Its center is occupied by the chief's circular tent, which is surrounded by three circles. The inner circle includes the animals used by the cavalry, the outer one is formed by the huts or tents of the army, and the middle circle consists of the hearths located in front of the army units. The camp has a diameter of 100 m and only one gate, which is shown in the upper part of the drawing. This gate, together with the central tent, defines a major half-axis of the camp, which extends through the installations of the chief's wife and the kitchen.

The contour of the camp of Menelik II (see Pankhurst 1966: 111) is almost an ellipse (Fig. 4a). There is a square space, surrounded by another ellipse, just below

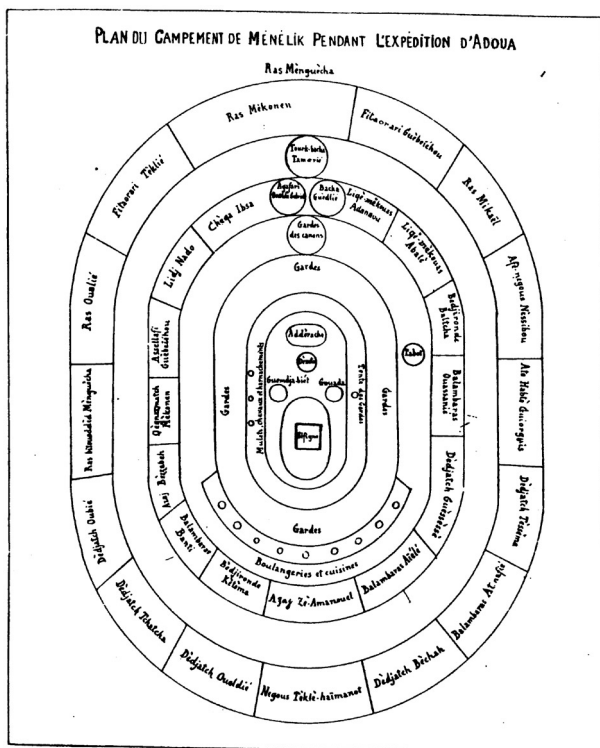


Figure 4a] Diagram of the camp of Menelik II, 1896 (Pankhurst 1966).

the center of the ellipse. This is the palace, which together with the adjoining structures forms a cruciform pattern, with as center probably the main gate of the palace. This group is surrounded by two ellipses concentric with the contour of the camp, outside of which the guards of the royal compound are stationed. Beyond this central area, there are two concentric zones; the outer part of each of these zones is composed of segments bearing the names of the dignitaries responsible for them. The segments of two zones correspond by pairs, with minor divergences, in such a way that two perpendicular axes (XX and YY, Fig. 4b) are created; in each of the four quadrants formed by the intersection of these

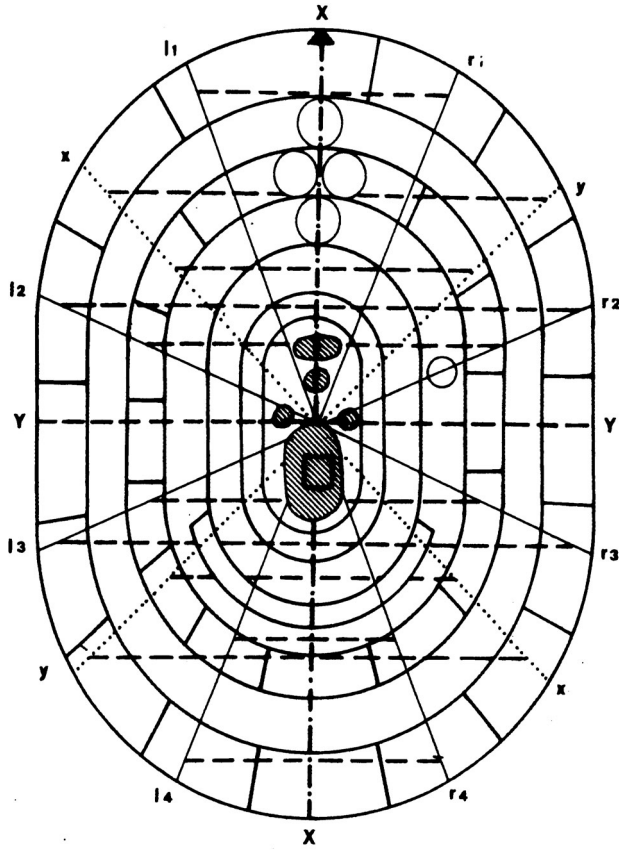


Figure 4b] Model presiding over the camp of Menelik II.
 XX. Main axis. YY. Secondary axis. xx, yy. Diagonal axes. r1-r4, l1-l4. Radii (combining into diameters). The broken lines indicate the correspondence between the dignitaries of the left and the right. A central cruciform pattern is composed by the shadowed elements.

axes run three radii, each related to a pair of segments. The four middle radii of the quadrants compose another set of (almost) perpendicular axes, forming an intermediary cross in respect to the above major cross. The whole pattern is thus concentric, cruciform, and radial, composed of four quadrants, and subdivided into sixteen sectors. Sixteen is a function of the number four (4×4), and this is also the case, as we shall see, with the twelve gates of the left and the right of the palace and the royal compound (4×3). The radial pattern dictates the disposition of the dignitaries in each of the two zones, which is symmetrical to the main axes of the camp. This disposition is similar to the traditional one of the royal gates

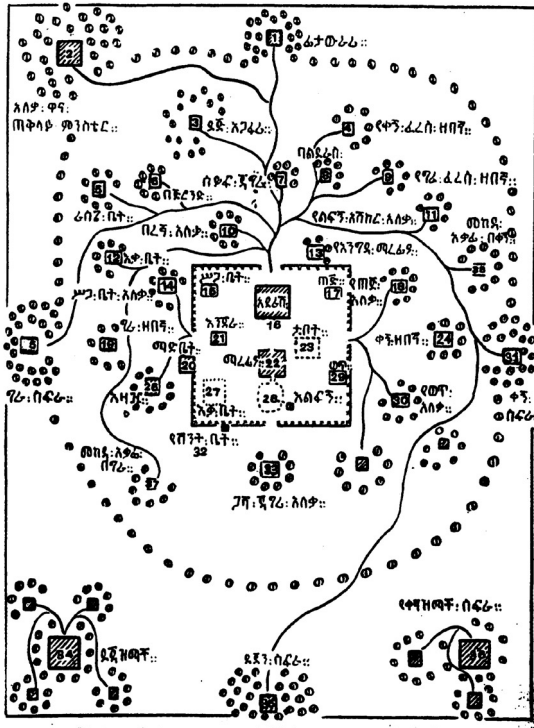
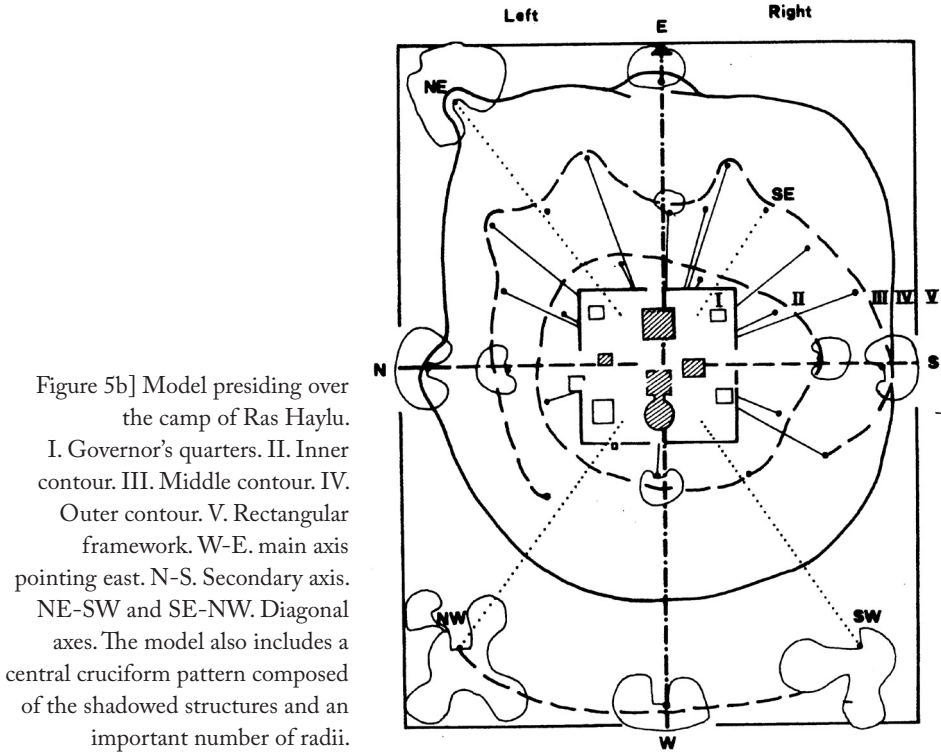


Figure 5a] Drawing of the military camp of Ras Haylu, 1929 (Griaule 1934a).

and relates to the division of the camp into left and right.

In addition, however, to the written accounts and the data offered by built space itself, we dispose of the ethnographic testimony by Marcel Griaule (1934a), about six centuries after the *Ser'ata Mangest*. The author notes that the antique arrangements of the military camps were disappearing at this time. His account concerns a camp erected at Adet by the Ras Hayla Yasus II, called Haylu, the governor of Gojam. Ras Haylu would move annually within his province in order to assure his political position and the propagation of Ethiopian civilization, and being obliged to have a camp he still followed the traditional model. It is one of these camps, erected during the nineteen-twenties, that is described by Griaule on the basis of a sketch drawn for him by an Ethiopian high court functionary in 1929; the sketch was redrawn by Griaule (see Fig. 5.a). The discussion that follows is based on Griaule's description, completed with further observations.

The quarters of the governor occupy the center of the camp, delimited by a square enclosure with a side of about 100 m. This enclosure has four gates, one in the middle



of each side, which are oriented towards the four cardinal points. The main gate is the one to the east, in the upper part of the square, which is the point of convergence of all the roads to and from the secondary camps that surround the governor's quarters. The scale of the sketch is not consistent, because a number of these camps are at a significant distance from the governor's quarters. A fair idea of the total extent of this military camp, housing an army of 25,000–30,000 men, is given by the fact that the time needed to walk between the vanguard, with its chief *Fitawrari* (1), and the *Dajan Sefra* (35), the rearguard, as well as between the *Gerra Sefra* (25), the camp of the left, and the *Kegne Sefra* (31), the camp of the right, was about five hours, a time that translates into a walk of approximately 25 km. The secondary camps have a circular form and revolve around a central tent, occupied by the chief of the compound.

Griaule rightly observes that the 'general disposition of all the units around the central quarters is circular', that the outer circular contour, defined by a series of tents for the army without specified functions, is a way for his informant to underline this fact, and that the secondary camps are also circular. Griaule is essentially describing, without naming it, a concentric pattern. In fact, the prince's

quarters are surrounded by *three* more or less concentric and more or less circular patterns (Fig. 5b). Outside these three contours and behind the camp there are secondary camps, organized in three clusters and arranged in a more or less straight line. Griaule adds that the functionary inscribed his sketch within an oriented rectangle and considers as certain that the general plan of the camp is identified for his informant with a square or rectangle. We shall discuss this issue below. The exact geometrical forms of the above three contours and their divergences should not preoccupy us. They do not conceal the ideal model presiding over the spatial organization of military camps.

The eastward orientation of Ras Haylu's camp is attributed by Griaule to the direction of the enemy. But behind and beyond this practical consideration there seems to lie a symbolic reason, if we think of the westward visual axis of the king. The eastern gate of the prince's quarters is not isolated, but belongs to a wider system of four oriented gates. Griaule mentions that the camp is divided into a right part and a left part, an observation which he bases on the nomenclature of certain military functions. In the case of this camp, left is related to north and right to south, connections that reverse the ones we found earlier in the analysis of the *Ser'ata Mangest*. Now the back of the E-W axis has become the front. The house of the hydromel (17), the alcoholic beverage of wealthy Ethiopians (Griaule 1934c: 279–280) is in the right part of the camp (and inside the main quarters), and the same is the case in Dejatch Guosho's camp, in which hydromel is spatially opposed to celery; this opposition shows that this latter camp is also divided into left and right parts.

The system of the four cardinal points is further elaborated in the camp of Ras Haylu. Beyond the four gates of the prince's quarters, the four camps of the left, the right, the vanguard, and the rearguard mark for a second time these four points, and the result is the creation of two major axes crossing perpendicularly and creating an oriented cross. The two axes are further emphasized by other elements of the camp which are located on them.

Five elements (21, 23, 16, 22, 28) are located within the governor's quarters and form a central cruciform pattern that we find also in the camp of Menelik II. They are positioned in such a way relative to the four gates that they do not allow the creation of rectilinear roads running between opposite pairs of gates. While thus the form and orientation of the precinct, and the location and number of the gates remind us strongly of the model of the Roman camp and city, the Ethiopian

model in fact is far from having a *cardo* (the Roman N–S artery) and a *decumanus* (E–W artery). The E–W axis emerges as the principal one, through the scale of its main elements inside the governor’s quarters and their marked linear arrangement. Apart from this fourfold orientation towards the cardinal points, there are in the camp of Ras Haylu four half-axes bisecting the major ones, and the radiality of the whole set of the half-axes is further emphasized by the location of the secondary camps and the road network. The same radial pattern characterizes the camps of both Menelik II and Dejatch Guosho.⁸

To sum up, the spatial pattern emerging from Griaule’s account is closely connected both to the patterns of the camps of Menelik II and Dejatch Guosho, and to the pattern prescribed in the *Ser’ata Mangest*. The common structural elements of the model of the three camps are:

- (a) The *marked center*, occupied by the owner of the camp, which in the two big camps has a cruciform pattern.
- (b) A *main axis*, which in Ras Haylu’s camp is oriented to the east.
- (c) The existence of a *left* and a *right* half.
- (d) An *axis perpendicular* to the main axis – which cannot be clearly established for the smaller camp – so that the two axes result in a quadripartition of the camp.
- (e) A *tripartite* or *quadripartite concentric* organization.
- (f) Two *diagonal axes* bisecting the major ones, which are not present (at least not materialized) in the smaller camp.
- (g) A *radial* pattern integrating all the above axes, which could be part of the model in the *Ser’ata Mangest*, but if so is not clearly perceptible there due to limited textual evidence.

The camp as the heavenly Jerusalem

The long-lived Ethiopian camp model is not without resemblance to the form of the heavenly Jerusalem, which became the divine prototype of all Christian settlements. The form of the heavenly Jerusalem in turn was dictated by the Hebrew conception of the earth and the cosmos. According to this conception, at

⁸ It is possible that the observations made here on the geometrical regularities of the Ethiopian camps offer important clues to the traditional technical procedures of surveyors.

the center of the earth and the world there is a cosmic mountain, which is the highest place and identified with the axis of the cosmos. This center is related to four half-axes, linking it to the limits of the earth (and the cosmos). Two of these half-axes constitute an E–W axis and the other two the N–S axis; the cosmic limits are a circle or a square. Christianity has been present in northern Ethiopia since the conversion of the Kingdom of Aksum by Saint Frumentius in the fourth century, and as we saw above the Solomonid kings traced their descent from the kings of Israel. Did the Amhara borrow the model for the royal camp from the Judeo-Christian tradition?

That the king was associated with heavenly Jerusalem is also attested by Manfred Kropp. There is an Amhara document, *Kebrā Nagast*, also dating from the reign of Amda Sion in the early fourteenth century. The title is usually translated as ‘The Glory of the Kings’; it is a text legitimizing the Solomonid dynasty by tracing their ancestry back through the kings of Aksum to Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. In a recent article, Kropp (1996) argues that *Kebrā Nagast* founds this legitimization on the fact that the kings of Aksum, and thus also their descendants, were the guardians of the Ark of the Covenant, which was kept in the cathedral of Aksum. Aksum was the new Sion, the holiest of Ethiopia’s holy cities; indeed, it was the image and earthly embodiment of the heavenly Sion-Jerusalem. In this light Kropp also interprets the many references to Sion in Amda-Sion’s Chronicle (*The Victorious Campaigns of King Amda Sion*): Ethiopia is the new Sion; more particularly, Sion is where the royal presence is (Kropp 1996: 115).

However, the Paleo-Christian cosmic spatial model, which goes back to Hebrew traditions, is founded on the cross, itself a function of the cardinal points (see also Müller 1961: 179–182). Contrary to this model, the Amhara spatial model in the *Ser’ata Mangest* is primarily founded on the body and related to the course of the sun, an association achieved through the line of sight of the king. It thus seems likely that the Amhara model is founded on a local conception, at least in the sense that it was not introduced with Christianity; Judeo-Christian symbolism was apparently superimposed on an indigenous model. The data concerning the royal camp lead us to think that the Amhara had the notion of an E–(center)–W axis. Their knowledge of the Christian cosmic model indicates that they probably conceptualized the dividing line between front and rear as a N–S axis. These two axes are connected to a quadripartition of the camp, which

was strongly conceptualized by the Amhara. We should, however, admit that, in spite of the (probable) identification in the royal camp of an oriented cross, this cross represented a conception which was not the dominant one – though it was probably a legitimizing conception in the context of Christianity – and was dependent on a deeper indigenous conception. On the other hand, Ras Haylu's camp brings to the foreground the oriented cross and orientation to the east, both elements that connect it more closely to the Christian tradition. In both cases, however, this cross does not take the form of two perpendicular streets, as happens with the heavenly Jerusalem – and with the Roman model.

Thus, the spatial model of the Ethiopian camp shows both permanence and change, mobility within immobility. What can be seen as a variant of a model may be the result of an historical process. The changes between the model in the *Ser'ata Mangest* and Ras Haylu's camp is a case of the dialectics between history and structure. A similar dialectics governs the intertextuality of the Ethiopian model, since historical processes led to the amalgamation of two structures belonging to different cultures. There is no doubt that in macro-history the discontinuity upon which Foucault (for example, 1966: 229–233) is focused may be observed, though perhaps not in the radical manner Foucault assumes. But the Ethiopian model reminds us that *relative* discontinuity and *gradual* change operate in history together with the *tendency* to structural persistence.

The homology between camp, palace, and church

The model regulating the military camp can be further illuminated and extended if we have recourse to the palace and the church. Tamrat (1972: 269–274), referring again to the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first of the sixteenth, gives us a description of the king's palace and compound (Fig. 6). The compound consists of two concentric circular enclosures, the inner one named *Meggareja* and the outer *Jegol*; the area between the two enclosures is very vast. The inner enclosure, the palace, comprises thirteen exits. Tamrat situates the main gate *Widinesh Dej* – which belongs to the main axis of the camp and the compound – to the 'west', according to him for convenience only. There were twelve more gates equidistant from each other, six on each side of the main gate; the two front gates on both sides of the main gate were of special importance and were used only by persons invited by the king. This twin arrangement of the gates is related to

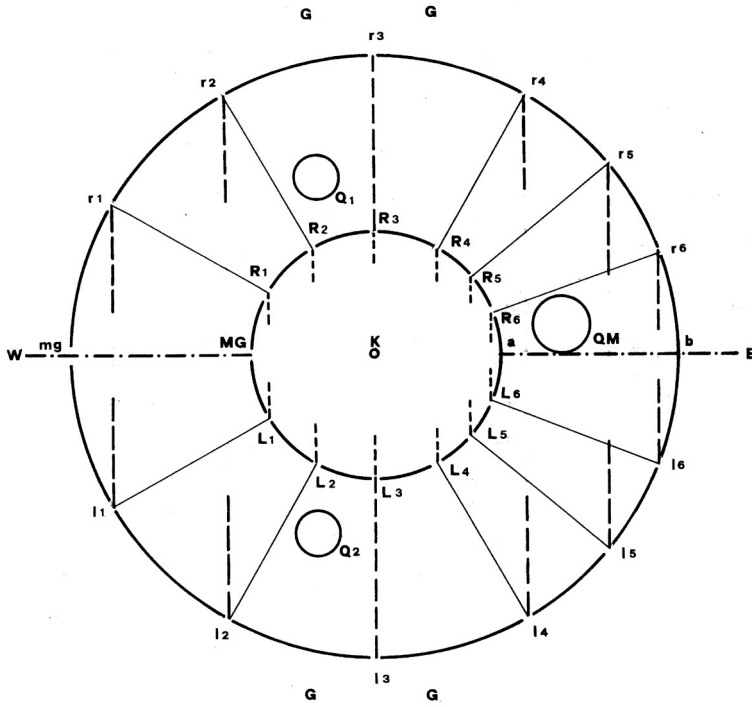


Figure 6] Schematic plan of the king's palace and compound (redrawn on the basis of Tamrat 1972).

K. King. QM. Queen Mother. Q1. Queen of the Right. Q2. Queen of the Left. a. Enclosure of the palace (*Meggareja*). b. Enclosure of the compound (*Jegol*). E-W. Main axis. MG. Main gate of the palace *Widinesh Dej*. L1-L6. Left gates of the palace. R1-R6. Right gates of the palace. mg. Main gate of the compound. l1-l6. Left gates of the royal compound. r1-r6. Right gates of the royal compound. G. Guards.

the organization of the court into left and right. The same holds for the similar arrangement of the thirteen gates of the outer enclosure.

As shown in Figure 6, the corresponding gates of the two enclosures should have been situated on the same radius, and just less than half of the gates would thus have been situated by groups of four on the same diameter. If this was the case, a radial pattern of spatial organization would be combined with the concentric and dualist structures we have already identified. In fact, an elementary radial pattern can be detected already in the description of the camp in *Ser'ata Mangest*

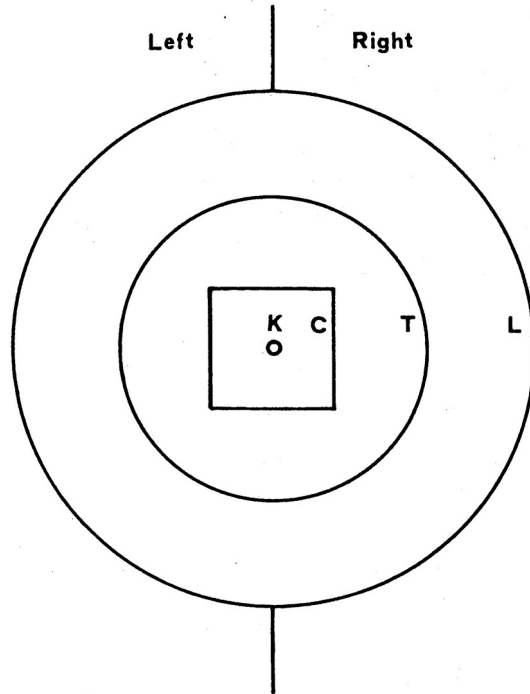


Figure 7] Schematic plan of the king's palace.
 K. King. C. King's chamber.
 T. House of the Throne. L. House of the Lion (reception hall).

and, as we saw, this pattern is clear in the later examples of camps. The inner gates were guarded by high-ranking officials of the royal guard and at the outer gates numerous guards were stationed, as was the case to a lesser degree with the rest of the space around the outer enclosure. It seems clear that each set of gates is a static spatial anchoring for the narration of the myth of origin, to which it alludes in an abridged form. It may also give an Ethiopian version of the heavenly Jerusalem with its twelve gates that has as its center God himself, here replaced by the emperor. This number is the number of the gates of the royal compound in Gondar (Pankhurst 1961: 151), where most of the gates are arranged symmetrically to the axis on which the main gate lies.

The number and spatial organization of these gates is homologous to those of the two rows of six seats, headed by a very high thirteenth seat, which Alvares tells us were placed outside the *cacalla* (read *shekella*), the long tent of the court of justice erected in the vast open space in front of the king. The two rows, the seats of which were kept in the tent and moved out daily, were associated with the judges of the left and the right respectively, but the seats were not occupied

by them, because the judges sat on the ground.⁹

We may understand the internal organization of the palace based on article 23 of the *Ser'ata Mangest*, which contains regulations of the royal palace routines. We learn that the palace includes the king's chamber, and that curtains and carpets are two manifestly important features of it. The palace shows a tripartite arrangement. It is composed of an inner square chamber of the king, which is surrounded by two rings, the outer limits of which are circular (Fig. 7). The inner ring is the 'House of the Throne' and the outer ring is the 'House of the Lion', the reception hall.

Since the palace occupies the center of the camp, its central room, the king's chamber, represents the center of the center. As we see from the text *Canons of the Church* (see Griaule 1932: 31–33), there is a homology between the palace and the Ethiopian church. The king's chamber is compared to the sanctuary of the church where only priests were allowed to enter, a sanctuary that is a metaphor for 'Jerusalem'. The curtains of the king's chamber were metaphors for the curtains of the sanctuary hiding the *tabot*, a tablet comprising the Covenant, made initially from stone and later from wood, that was placed on the altar. The tabot is a metaphor for Christ, his tomb and the Holy Trinity (see Griaule 1932: 8, 17). As the holy tabot must not be seen by profane eyes, so the king must be hidden from any profane sight.

In more recent times, during council meetings the king would appear openly and the officials had to stand. But in older times, as witnessed by Bruce, he was in the dark in a special room which communicated with the council room through two big windows with folding shutters. He was also hidden when giving audiences and his subjects spoke to him through an intermediary, with eyes lowered. He was only seen by high state officials and his pages. However, he appeared to the people three times a year, at Christmas, Easter, and the Feast of the Holy Cross (see Stylianoudi 1984: 89–107).

Two of the curtains of the king's chamber had the metaphorical significance of the guardian angels of the Lord in Bethlehem who 'stretched like muslin

⁹ The empty throne is a theme known from Mediterranean and Oriental civilizations and commemorates kings or is offered to gods (see Leroy 1973: 36–39). In Africa it is found among the Sudanese Ashanti, for whom the 'Throne of Thrones' connotes the presence of the numinous (Stylianoudi 1984: 300).

cloth'. The carpets of the chamber refer metaphorically to those of the sanctuary and to the fine carpets, made of high quality wool, which were laid out for Solomon's coronation. These carpets prevented the king's feet from touching the ground, as the king's feet must never touch the ground; he is supposed to stand high, in heaven and between the heavens and the earth. The king thus is attached to a sacred space opposed to the surrounding profane space (the semantic opposition 'sacred' versus 'profane' founds the religious code).

The homology between palace and church can be further extended to the rings surrounding their central space, but we shall return below to the issue of the church. We saw that two of the curtains of the king's chamber are his guardian angels. Another threshold, that between the 'House of the Throne' and the 'House of the Lion', is the responsibility of the *Jan Tekel* and the *Wotsat*, the pages and the servants of the king, who are either clerics or young boys who have not reached puberty. They, like the angels, are considered beings without sex; and both abstain from sexual relations. Thus, a sexually neutral element marks the thresholds between spaces.

We observe the same conception on the scale of the camp. The *Rak Massare*, the Master of Ceremonies, a priest, and the *Derebba Bet*, the House of the Pages of the King, are located between the inner and the outer zones of the camp (Fig. 1, 6) and correspond to the above threshold guardians; they are also considered as being without sex (they belong to the category 'neither-nor'). Thus, a homology is established between the camp and the palace. Another homology is due to the tripartite organization of both, with reference to the model of the *Ser'ata Mangest*. These connections would lead us to the hypothesis that the outer limits of the two zones of the camp were circular in form and the compound of the king was square. This hypothesis does not necessarily contradict Tamrat, according to whom the enclosure of the king's compound was circular. The two forms could have been interchangeable, as was the case many centuries later: Ras Haylu's compound was square, Menelik II's elliptical. We should also recall that, according to Griaule's data, this equivalence seems also to have been established for camps: in the sketch of Ras Haylu's camp, the external rectangular contour is formed to a certain extent by the same elements that form the outer circular contour and gives the impression that it constitutes its *alter ego*. The data we dispose of seem to indicate that, although the circle and the orthogonal are

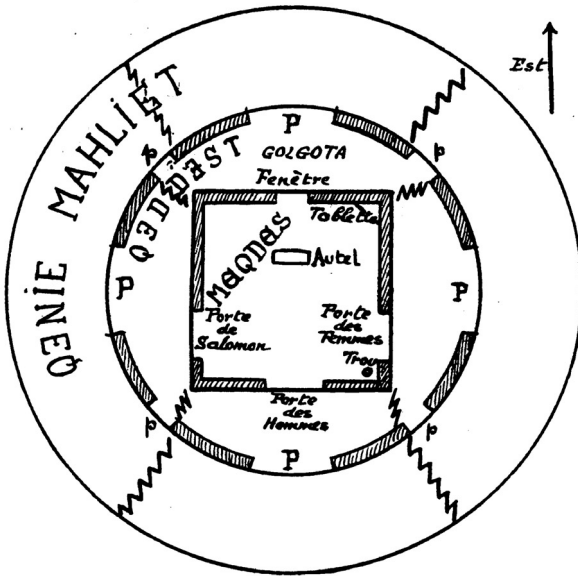


Figure 8a] Plan of the circular Ethiopian church according to Griaule (1934b).

thus in a certain sense equivalent, they could be used interchangeably in practice only for the innermost and outermost contours, the intermediary contours always remaining circular.

We find a close analogy to the camp and the palace in the plan of the circular Amhara church. This plan is not the oldest church plan in Ethiopia; it dates, according to Jules Leroy, from the sixteenth century.¹⁰ The typical plan of the circular church consists, according to Griaule (1934b), of a central cube of masonry oriented E–W, the sanctuary (*maqdas*), containing the altar (*manbara tabot*); the sanctuary is surrounded by two concentric circular walls (Fig. 8a). Paulette and

¹⁰ The churches of the Ethiopian medieval period (from the middle of the fourth to shortly before the middle of the sixteenth century) are generally rectangular or square in plan, divided into three naves and oriented towards the east. The churches within natural caves and the subterranean churches belong to the same period – they first appear in the tenth century – and their plan does not differ from the other churches. The rectangular plan and other architectural details originate from the Aksum culture. The circular plan later spread throughout the country, and today it is only in the north that one encounters some rectangular or cruciform churches (Leroy 1973: 90, 92–159).

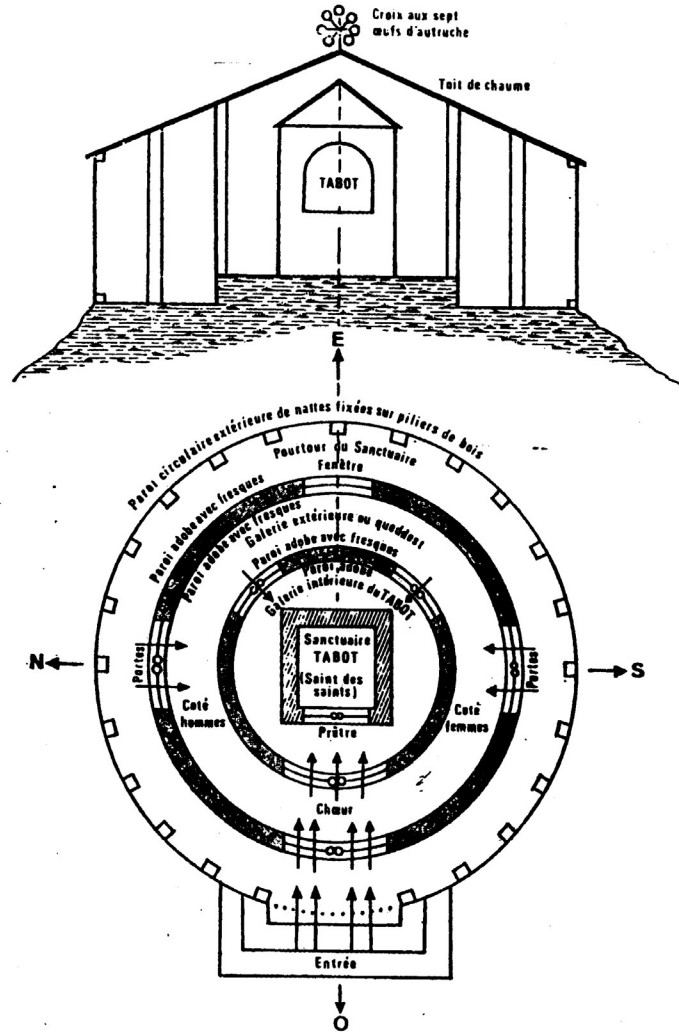


Figure 8b] Plan of the circular Ethiopian church according to P. and M. Deribéré (1972).

Maurice Deribéré (1972: Fig. 18) present a more extended version, according to which these two walls are in turn surrounded by a third enclosure made of wooden columns on which straw mats are fixed; the distances between the enclosures are almost equal (Fig. 8b). In Griaule's plan, there are also two axes outside the sanctuary oriented towards the intermediary directions. We recognize in these

plans the model of the camp. Given the relatively late appearance of the circular church, it seems probable that the traditional Amhara spatial model was also extended to churches beginning in the sixteenth century.

Both Griaule and the Deribérés locate men in the northern and women in the southern part of the church; also men gather in the left part of the church and women in the right. This association north–left and south–right presupposes an orientation facing east – as is the case with Ras Haylu’s camp. This differentiation of genders is typical of the Eastern Orthodox Church, though there men stand to the right and women to the left. Thus, the Ethiopian viewpoint reverses the relations between left–right and female–male, something we also observed with the royal camp in the *Ser’ata Mangest*, and which points to the indigenous origin of this classification.

The model of the *Ser’ata Mangest*, then, was not only long-lived but also of very general application, regulating built space both at the urban and the architectural scale. In fact its reach in geographical scale was even greater, because it also extended to regional space. The country was divided into four provinces, each with its own governor and autonomous from each other: Tigre, Shoa, Gojam, and Gondar. The camp model thus appears to be only one aspect of a spatial *super-model*. The latter was, at least until very recently, still structuring the Ethiopian conception of space. Donald N. Levine (1965: 74–75) found it among Amhara peasants as the ‘dominant configuration in the Amhara’s experience of space’. As Levine describes it, this configuration consists of a ‘charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance’. Levine associates to this concentric and hierarchical structure the traditional military camp, the peasant home, the church, and also spontaneous spatial arrangements during festivals and religious celebrations.

The replication of the same model in successive scales may lead to what may appear at first glance as contradictions, since what is ‘outside’ in one scale – and has a certain signification accordingly – may be ‘inside’ for the next scale, with a quite opposite signification. It is not impossible for an overlapping area to have simultaneously contradictory significations, but it may also change meaning as a function of the context in which it is seen.

We find comparable phenomena of contextual adaptation of signification in Roxana Waterson’s (1991: 97, 99) study of South-East Asian architecture. Discussing the Balinese approach to orientation, the author contrasts earlier views,

reporting strong oppositions, with a recent critique which considers the former as too simplistic and rigid, and notes that Balinese concepts are not thus polarized but much more complex and ambiguous. Frequently, and surely concerning Ethiopian thought, these two views are not exclusive, but render two coexisting realities, the one moving within a specific context and the other following from a superimposition of contexts. Waterson, discussing Sumba island (SE of Java), mentions the observation of G. Forth on the contextual shift of signification: in ritual, the innermost, sacred parts of the house are considered as male, but in daily life the whole of the house, the running of which is the responsibility of women, is female, as opposed to the outside which is male. Examples of this kind, far from proving that ambiguity is the sole foundation of culture and contesting the reality of the classification systems, show that these systems and their spatial manifestations are not rigid, but incorporate flexibility. The latter, however, is by no means the product of isolated individual decisions, but of defined cultural contexts (cf. Moore 1986: 118–119, 185–186), that is, semantic relevancies, which are part of one and the same classification system, activated according to the aim of cultural practices and practical situational requirements. This very structural determination simultaneously secures a relative openness of the system, which on the one hand may be not fully coherent, and on the other is further opened by the dynamics of *habitus* and wider historical processes, the same kind of processes that created it in the first place.

Cosmic king, cosmic camp, and material power

There is a final aspect of the semantics of the Ethiopian spatial model as it appears in the *Ser'ata Mangest*, an aspect which concerns the total logic of the Ethiopian classification system as related to its projection into geographical space. In chapters I and III of the *Ser'ata Mangest*, two quite similar conceptual structures refer to the spatial organization of offices around the king and are connected to the plan and organization of the palace. The first structure concerns the legal system and shows the location of the two judges, one of the left and one of the right, in respect to the king as center. As we saw above, the king-center and the central space around him, classified as 'of the king', are not dualist in nature: the first is a kind of zero point and the second is neutral, being neither left nor right. On the threshold between the royal and the dualist legal, the *Tsirag*

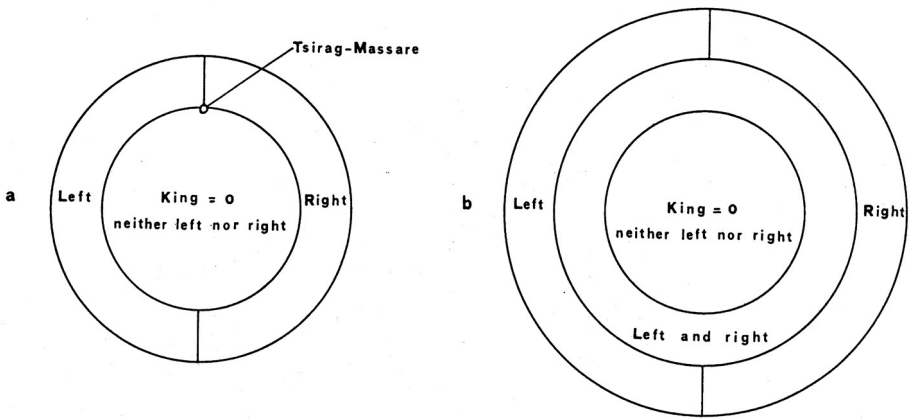


Figure 9a] The legal structure around the king.

Figure 9b] The administrative structure around the king.

Massare, the official responsible for the horn containing the sacred unction, is positioned (Fig. 9a).

According to the administrative variant of this structure, which is more complex, there is a space around the royal center which is again neutral, neither left nor right. This space is followed by a space comprising two judges of clerical status, one of whom is probably head of the eunuchs, who belong at the same time both to the left and to the right. Finally, two groups and two dignitaries, the *Bitwoded*,¹¹ assistants to the king in administration (political, specifically administrative code) with the function of ‘Guards of Order’, are related to the left–right dichotomy (Fig. 9b). These two dignitaries flank the king as the archangels St. Michael and St. Gabriel flank the thrones of the Lord and St. Mary, the one standing to the left and the other to the right (Mekouria 1966: 12).

This static structure points to a structured dynamic movement: it starts from a zero point which is a unity beyond bipolarity or divisions and at the same time also their origin; next appears a unified neutral space which however foreshadows the dualism to come; then there is a space that presupposes dualism, since it combines its two poles, but also remains unified; and finally a dualist structure is manifested that divides the corresponding space in two opposed, ranked and complementary halves. We see that the first two spaces are beyond the left–right division, as well as the gender and sex division. It is not by chance that the de-

¹¹ Plural *Bitwodedotch*. For reasons of clarity, in our text we do not reproduce changes in noun forms from singular to plural.

scription of the royal camp in articles 21 and 22, chapter III, of the *Ser'ata Mangest* follows a similar movement: it starts from the king and the queen, the heavenly and the earthly centers; it is strictly divided in two parts, the first describing the arrangement of the left and the second of the right sector of the camp outside the royal compound; and it follows a concentric logic, moving from the central area towards the periphery.

Only four persons, who had the title of judge before the reign of King Zara Yacob (1434–1468), had the right to come into direct contact with the king. They were clerical and as such considered sacred and sexually neutral, and because of their neutrality they did not belong either to the left or to the right. The metaphorical significance of the king and these four dignitaries is Christ and his four evangelists or Christ and the four celestial animals of the Apocalypse (Mekouria 1966: 12). Since the king occupies the center of the world, the dynamic movement mentioned above connotes a cosmogony initiated by the god-king, a cosmogony also incorporated into articles 21 and 22 of the *Ser'ata Mangest*, and transforming the text into an archetypal force. The royal ritual functions as a daily reminder of the quality of the king as marking the zero moment of the temporal code. The *Tsirag Massare*, who also watches during the night over the king's chamber, at dawn cracks a great whip in order to chase away the wild beasts that entered the camp during the night and to announce the rising of the king. The king rises, like the sun, at the zero moment of time, the break of day (solar-astral code).

If the movement from the creator-king, preceding and eliminating cosmic tensions, to the dualism characterizing the cosmos outside the royal palace is a cosmogony, the static structure corresponding to it is a cosmology, and thus the royal compound is an image of the cosmos. The anthropomorphism of left and right acquires cosmic dimensions. The two *Bitwoded* with their affiliated groups on the limits of the palace, the *Tsirag Massare* standing on the same limits, now boundaries between the two rings of the legal structure, and the *Jan Tekel* and the *Wotsat* guarding the threshold between the two palace rings, all have the function of guaranteeing the order of society and the universe (social and cosmic codes). Homologous to both the palace and the church, the royal camp is a cosmogram revolving around the king as the center of the universe.

In the projection of the cosmos on the royal camp, we find three of the six modes of creating visual metaphors formulated by Suzanne Preston Blier (1987:

36–37) in her study on the Batammaliba in West Sudan. We find ‘nesting’, which she defines as the positioning of one element inside or upon another; these elements are used as metaphors for the ‘principle ideas of a larger cosmogonic narrative’ (a wider and more abstract term would be ‘topological relation’). Then there is ‘silhouetting’, the use of a ‘distinctive profile’ as metaphor for cosmogonic ideas (a more abstract term would be ‘[two- or three-dimensional] geometrical form’). Finally, there is ‘directional affiliation’, which is the positioning of an element in function of a direction or orientation (here we should distinguish between *textual* directional affiliation, in the case of built space directional relationships between built spatial elements, and *contextual* affiliation, following from orientation in respect to the surrounding or the cosmic environment).

The semiotic analysis of the *Ser’ata Mangest* delivers the codes shown in Table 1, which present that part of the Amhara classification system, included in the wider system, most closely involved in spatial symbolism. This part mainly draws on the nucleus and the central part of the system. A crucial characteristic of the concepts presented in the table is that, contrary to the metalinguistic concepts built by hard-core structuralists and based on the anthropologist’s interpretations, they are very close to the indigenous model. Table 1 reminds us that the king is not only the center but also the summit, which is both a social and a cosmic summit. The royal camp, then, is conceptually and geographically (see *katama*), not only a surface, but also a pyramidal volume. The symbolic concept of the summit was given a physical expression in the pyramidal arrangement of the consecutive spaces of the palace, the internal space occupying the highest level (Tamrat 1972: 269, 271). The king is simultaneously at the zero point and the highest point in space.

We observe from Table 1 that certain attributes of the central domain, which is the most highly valued, also appear as attributes of the left. As we saw, while usually in Africa right is the positively connoted part, in Ethiopia the left is the positive side. Since in the Christian tradition right is also positively connoted, we may assume that the reversal shown in the text derives from the indigenous Ethiopian tradition.¹² The close connection between center and left indicates a structural transformation and equivalence: at least in certain cases, the oppositional *concentric* structure *center* vs. *periphery* is transformed into the oppositional

¹² The most commonly encountered associations in Africa in connection with the right–left dualism are the associations of left with bad and female (Wieschhoff 1973: 59–64, 70).

CODE	LEFT (<i>GERRA</i>)/+	CENTER/++ (or around the center)	RIGHT (<i>KEGNE</i>)/-
political: royal	king royal, non-royal	king (queen) royal	queen non-royal
political: administrative	of the left	king	of the right
legal	judges of the left	king	judges of the right
military	of the left	king	of the right
religious	sacred, profane St. Michael	sacred Christ (St. Mary) <i>tabot</i>	profane St. Gabriel
religious: cosmic	cosmos	cosmos axis	chaos
cosmic: solar-astral	heaven east north south	in-between sun east	earth west south north
cosmic or social	order summit	order summit	disorder
solar-astral and temporal	day	zero moment dawn	night
anthropomorphic: of gender and sex	male	asexual	female
anthropomorphic-spatial (also cosmic)	left front	center center	right rear
spatial (also cosmic)	center, periphery inside, outside up, summit	center inside up, summit	periphery outside down
chromatic	white		black

Table 1] A schematic outline of the nucleus and the central part of the Amhara classification system.

diametrical structure *left* vs. *right*, and *vice versa*. To these oppositions are related the oppositions *cosmos* vs. *chaos* (cosmic aspect of the religious code) and *order* vs. *disorder* (cosmic and social codes). Similar conceptual structures are thus realized in two different geometries, which are actually combined. It is exactly this structural complex which regulates the model of the royal camp, with the further addition of the duplication of the diametrical structure: the two diametrical structures *left* vs. *right* and *front* vs. *rear* lead to a subordinate quadripartition. The origin of this quadripartition thus appears to be Ethiopian and not due to the dominant cosmic and spatial quadripartition of the Hebrew and Christian traditions, but being akin to the latter it enabled the superimposition of the two structures. We are once more confronted in the case of the connection center–left with the combination of two different contexts. If we were not aware of this fact, we might think that the classification system is inconsistent, contradictory, and blurred, even maybe that this very concept is unreliable. But in fact quite the opposite is true, and the apparent inconsistency of cultural logic follows in reality from a structural interplay. Not only does the system reconcile contradictions, but it also provides the means to overcome them.

The codes shown in Table 1 are not all of the same importance but are hierarchically ordered. The religious code constitutes the summit of this hierarchy; *in actuality* it structures the classification system and the whole Amhara world view, and *ideologically* it regulates its functioning. The spatial aspect of the cosmic code, which is a fundamental subcode of the religious code, dictates the spatial model. But this aspect is heavily influenced by the human body and thus the anthropomorphic code, another crucial code of the system. Three other codes intervene energetically in the construction of the cosmos and the spatial model: a code of gender and sex, another subcode of the anthropomorphic code; the solar-astral subcode of the cosmic code, mainly revolving around the daily movement of the sun from east to west; and the temporal code, closely related to the latter. These codes, revolving around the religious code, constitute the ideological nucleus of the Amhara classification system; the leading codes of the central part of the system are the social and the legal. We have no doubt that such a code nucleus, though of course with different structures and contents, is to be found in all precapitalist societies. Through the articulation with space of these and the other spatially manifested codes of the classification system, the military camp, and

built and regional space in general, are transformed into a vehicle of the system and thus a cultural deposit.

There is, however, one more code belonging to the nucleus of the system: the royal. It is *ideologically* very close, but subordinated, to the religious and the cosmic codes. On the other hand, in *actual use* the whole system is manipulated and in the last analysis regulated by the royal code and its most valorized element, the king. The presence of the king, linked to the center, is also linked to the recuperation, by this single element of the royal code, of the whole of the classification system. This installation in the center is a legitimization strategy by which the king attempts to secure his actual social power, since power is not only, not even primarily, symbolic. The Ethiopian emperor and his court stand higher than any official of the church. They are an image of God and the heavens and mirror the celestial order on earth. The powerful central position of the king in the classification system is projected into cosmic space as the possession of the vertical world axis and the center of the universe, onto earth as the cosmic horizontal visual axis starting from the divine emperor-center, and on time as the occupation of the zero moment of time. It is through these strategies that the supposed mediator of the Invisible legitimizes his position as the material Master.

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