

**ATrA**

*Aree di transizione linguistiche e culturali in Africa*

**3**



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# Cultural and Linguistic Transition explored

Proceedings of the ATrA closing workshop  
Trieste, May 25-26, 2016

Ilaria Micheli (ed.)



# Table of contents

	ILARIA MICHELI		SHEREEN EL KABBANI & ESSAM ELSAEED
VII	<i>Introduction</i>		46 <i>The Documentation of the Pilgrimage Arts in Upper Egypt – A comparative Study between Ancient and Islamic Egypt</i>
	PART I – ANTHROPOLOGY / CULTURE STUDIES		
	SIGNE LISE HOWELL		PART II – ARCHAEOLOGY
2	<i>Cause: a category of the human mind? Some social consequences of Chewong (Malaysian rainforest hunter-gatherers) ontological understanding</i>		PAUL J. LANE
	ILARIA MICHELI		60 <i>People, Pots, Words and Genes: Multiple sources and recon-structions of the transition to food production in eastern Africa</i>
13	<i>Women's lives: childhood, adolescence, marriage and motherhood among the Ogiek of Mariashoni (Kenya) and the Kulango of Nassian (Ivory Coast)</i>		ILARIA INCORDINO
	LORENZA MAZZEI		78 <i>The analysis of determinatives of Egyptian words for aromatic products</i>
33	<i>Continuity and Innovation in the Ethiopian illustrated manuscripts: the case of Geometric Art</i>		ANDREA MANZO
			87 <i>Bi3w Pwnt in the archaeological record. Preliminary results and perspective of research</i>

- DARIO NAPPO  
109 *Roman attempts to control Eastern Africa*
- CHIARA ZAZZARO  
131 *Maritime cultural traditions and transitions in the Red Sea*
- MARCO BALDI  
147 *The king Amanikhareqerem and the Meroitic world: an account after the last discoveries*
- ESSAM ELSAEED & HODA KHALIFA  
166 *A Comparative Study of Modified Animal Horns in Ancient Egypt & Modern African Tribes*
- AHMED ADAM  
188 *The Archaeology and Heritage of the Sudanese Red Sea Region: Importance, findings, and challenges*
- PAULA VEIGA  
199 *Opium: was it used as a recreational drug in ancient Egypt?*
- PART III – LINGUISTICS
- MAARTEN MOUS  
218 *Language and Identity among marginal people in East Africa*
- MAURO TOSCO  
234 *On counting languages, diversity-wise*
- GRAZIANO SAVÀ  
246 *Bayso, Haro and the “paucal” number: history of contact around the Abbaya and C'amo Lakes of South Ethiopia*
- FRANCO GREVATIN  
257 *Due note tipologiche sulla lingua bawlé (Kwa)*
- GIANFRANCESCO LUSINI  
264 *The Costs of the Linguistic Transitions: Traces of Disappeared Languages in Ethiopia*
- SIMONE MAURI  
274 *Clause chaining across the Sahara*
- KELLY E. WRIGHT  
291 *Accounting for Vox Populi. Adjusting the Cost-Benefit Model of Language Planning by Incorporating Network Analysis in the Ghanaian Context*
- ANDREI AVRAM  
306 *An Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Arabic Vocabulary as Evidence of Language Contacts in the Uele district and the Redjaf-Lado Enclave*

# Introduction

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The ATRA WORKSHOP on linguistic, anthropological, archaeological, historical and philological issues related to areas or times in Africa characterized by phenomena of transition was held in Trieste (Italy) on May 24-26, 2016.

The workshop represented the closing event of the three years interdisciplinary ATrA project ([www.africantransitions.it](http://www.africantransitions.it)), funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities, Education and Research (MIUR) in the framework of its FIRB 2012 initiative.

Aim of the workshop was the discussion, on an international level, of the major themes treated during these years by the ATrA team, in order to stimulate a fruitful academic debate on the many facets of identity negotiation, ethnicity and cultural affiliation such as contact, creolization, integration, urbanization, climate or cultural change, language and cultural switch, market exchanges, human migration and any other possible related topics.

This edition contains both a collection of the papers actually discussed by the ATrA team with the invited keynote speakers during the workshop, and a selection of other contributions by scholars who answered a specific call launched in the framework of the activities of the project.

The book is divided into three parts, corresponding to the three disciplines involved in the debate: anthropology, archaeology and linguistics.

All papers present context specific, very concrete case studies which bring to light specific aspects of transition in terms of changing systems of values (in an anthropological perspective), language shifts (starting from a descriptive dimension) and linguistic and cultural exchanges (through the analysis of written texts and artifacts).

Mechanisms of resilience and adaptation to new situations and contexts are described through an investigation which in many cases has the flavor of an intimate research, aimed above all at finding out the very essence of “being human”, be it in ancient or modern contexts and in small scale or large scale societies.

All the papers have been written by specialists of a determined discipline with the true aim to address scholars who could be expert in a different domain of the human sciences with respect to their own, in order to encourage eccentric reflections and stimulate a true multi-level and multi-disciplinary dialogue.

Therefore, this edition is not aimed at proposing solutions, but rather at putting on the table new hints and traces that each reader, according to her/his specific interests, can synthesize in a “viable toolbox” allowing her/him to orient her/himself in any other contexts in transition.

Due to the miscellaneous nature of the book and in order to facilitate its reading, each paper is introduced by an abstract and accompanied by a set of keywords.



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