

# Somali and Ethiopian material of the "Collezione Etnografica Lanza" presented to the Natural History Museum of the University of Florence

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## ABSTRACT

Description of the objects collected by Benedetto Lanza during the Italian naturalistic expeditions that he made in Somalia and Ethiopia between 1962 and 1978. Many of the objects described in this paper are particularly significant as documents of the traditional and still active craftsmanship of the Horn of Africa; these were exhibited in Florence in 1988 at the exhibition "Firenze e la Somalia". In 2004 Lanza donated his collection to the Section of Anthropology and Ethnology of the Museum of Natural History of the University of Florence. Lanza's collection is a valuable enrichment of the already considerable Museum's ethnographic holdings from Somalia and Ethiopia.

Key words:

ethnography, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Museum of Natural History of the University of Florence.

## RIASSUNTO

*Materiale somalo ed etiopico della "Collezione Etnografica Lanza" donato al Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università di Firenze.*

*Descrizione degli oggetti raccolti da Benedetto Lanza durante le missioni naturalistiche da lui svolte in Somalia ed Etiopia tra il 1962 e il 1978. Molti tra gli oggetti presi in considerazione in questo lavoro, di notevole interesse documentario dell'ancora viva tradizione artigianale del Corno d'Africa, furono esposti alla mostra "Firenze e la Somalia", tenutasi a Firenze nel 1988. In seguito, nel 2004, l'autore della raccolta li ha donati, insieme ad altro materiale, alla Sezione di Antropologia e Etnologia del Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università di Firenze. La collezione Lanza costituisce un prezioso arricchimento delle importanti raccolte etnografiche somale ed etiopiche già presenti in Museo*

Parole chiave:

*etnografia, Etiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università di Firenze.*

## INTRODUCTION

The material described in this catalogue was acquired by one of us (B.L.) in Somalia (1962, 1969, 1973, 1978) and Ethiopia (1971), while the items 21 from Afmedow (Somalia) and 43 from Walàko (Ethiopia) was respectively collected and donated to Lanza in 1954 by Dr. Ugo Funaioli and in 1988 by Dr. Maria Luisa Puccetti Azzaroli; the only Kenyan object (No. 35) was bought by B. Lanza from a Maasai in the Kongoni Farm, close to the Lake Naivasha, during the 1968 East African Mares-CRSTS (Underwater Scientific and Technical Research Group, Florence) Expedition.

The project for a systematic naturalistic exploration of Somalia, an idea suggested by Alberto Simonetta

and Ugo Funaioli, was started in 1959 by the University of Florence with the support of the CNR (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome) and other donors (cf. Simonetta, 1960 and 1963). Thence, after 1962, the CNR set up a centre for the study of tropical fauna and ecology, named CFEAO (Centro di Faunistica ed Ecologia dell'Africa Orientale), with a regular founding and addition of some personnel; finally, on 11.VIII.1971, it was reorganized and renamed CSFET (Centro di Studio per la Faunistica ed Ecologia Tropicali), equally attached to the former Istituto di Zoologia of the University of Florence, now Dipartimento di Biologia Animale e Genetica «Leo Pardi» (cf. Pardi, 1976 and 1982). To begin with, the Centre continued the organization of scientific missions especially to

East Africa; the first one was held in 1971 in Ethiopia, the last one in August 1990 in Kenya, the Centre was closed on 31.XII.2002.

The University of Florence and the scientific staff of the Natural History Museum of Florence have traditionally been involved in explorations in Somaliland. During the early XX century three missions went to Somalia: the first in 1913, the second in 1924 and the third in 1935. During these missions were secured a considerable amount of ethnographic material as well as many significant anthropological data.

The 1913 mission was promoted by Senator Giacomo De Martino, Governor of the former Italian colony of Somalia, and led by the geologist Giuseppe Stefanini accompanied by the entomologist Guido Paoli. Their field work included spot stations at Mogadishu (Muqdisho), Merca (Marka), Brava (Baraawe), Kismayo (Kismaayo) and the return sailing along Jubba River, from Giamame or Jamame (Jamaame) to Bardera (Baardheere). The scientists looked closely at the natural features of the country and collected natural history material as well as ethnographic objects such as combs, headrests, bags, spoons, sticks, hoes, weapons and musical instruments. The ethnographic material was studied by Nello Puccioni and includes 91 items catalogued under the Museum's numbers 15302-15392.

The second mission (January-July 1924) was organised by the Reale Società Geografica Italiana and was led again by Giuseppe Stefanini with the anthropologist and ethnologist Nello Puccioni. They visited most of Somalia from the Darror and Nogal valleys in Mijertein (Mijurtein) to the Webi Shabeli and Jubba valleys down to the area called Goscia (= forest in Somali), corresponding to a narrow belt of riparian forest along the Jubba River from the sea to the zone of Bardera (Baardheere). The ethnographic collection includes 433 specimens, 272 of them pertaining to lithic cultures, catalogued under numbers 19040-19472; most of the lithic implements are worked flintstones coming mainly from the former Sultanates of Obbia (Hohyaa) and Mijertein (Mijurtein). Notable among the specimens collected during this mission is a hut of the Galgial nomads, which is made of large straw mats hanging from a wooden scaffolding, complete in all its part and internal furnishings such as a straw mat bed with pelts of the Beisa Antelope [*Oryx beisa* (Rüppel)], a storage bag for cereals, milk and butter containers.

The third expedition (April 1935) was organised by the Royal Academy of Italy under the leadership of Nello Puccioni accompanied by the palaeoethnologist Paolo Graziosi. The mission arrived at Merca (Marka) aboard a cargo ship and sailed along the coastline to Mogadishu. It then moved along the Webi Shabeli Valley up to Mahadday Weyne. After stops at Afgoi (Afgooye) and Wanle Weyne the

scientists finally reached Buur Hakaba, where the Elai group was studied both from anthropological and ethnological points of view. The mission then went on to Baidoa (Baydhabo), Dinsor (Diinsoor) and Jubba Valley. While Graziosi explored the Buur region, Puccioni reached as far as the lower Jubba River where he undertook the most important part of his work: the study of the ethnic Somali groups of negroid Bantu origin (Waboni and Wagoscia).

There were several stops on the way, particularly important that at Kismayo (Kismaayo), a place close to the Bajiuni (Baajun) Islands, inhabited by a population of fishermen believed to be descent of ancient Arab colonizers and other eastern peoples who may have settled also in the relatively nearby Madagascar. There was also a halt at Brava (Baraawe) where live the Amaranis, fishermen and traders also believed to be descendants of Arabs arrived there around 1000 a.D. The collection assembled by the mission consists of 210 objects, catalogued under numbers 29379-29588. It includes furniture, clothing, ornaments, utensils, implements and hunting weapons, musical instruments and interesting samples of local medicinal herbs.

Paolo Graziosi, director of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology of Florence from 1954 to 1982, made other missions to Somalia in 1953, 1958 and 1963, visiting among other localities the caves of the region between Webi Shabeli and Jubba rivers, as well as Mijertein (Mijurtein), where he discovered interesting samples of rock art.

Data on the Somali anthropology and ethnography may be found in the following publications and their bibliographies: Almagià (1935), Bartoli Ciruzzi (1988a), Böttego (1900), Dainelli (1960), De Benedetti (1931), Graziosi (1940), Grottanelli (1955 and 1965), Ministero delle Colonie (1927), Museo dell'Uomo (1964), Ninni E. (1937), Panetta (1973-1974); summaries of a large number of papers and books dealing with the ethnology and folklore of the former Italian Eastern Africa, Parenti (1949), Pardini (1988), Paulitschke (1899), Perricone Viola (1937), Puccioni (1936a, 1936b, 1937a, 1937b), Puccioni & Grottanelli (1967), Rèvoil (1885), Vannutelli & Citeri (1899), Wickenburg (1899), and Zavattaro (2001).

The Ethiopian material in our Museum was received on different occasions between the late XIX and early XX centuries.

The collection made by Lanza consists of 43 objects and is a welcome new element in the context of a solid tradition of studies and research on Somaliland people and their cultural tradition. The objects described herewith were presented by him in the year 2004 to the Section of Anthropology and Ethnology of the Natural History Museum of the University of Florence, where they are catalogued under the numbers 33856-33898.

In this paper objects are grouped according to their place of origin; measures are expressed in mm and are given in the following order: height x width x length (depth).

Abbreviations: Cn.= collection number of the Museo Nazionale di Antropologia e Etnologia di Firenze (Section of the Museo di Storia Naturale, University of Firenze, Italy); Mea= measures.

## MATERIALS FROM SOMALIA

Data and/or illustrations on Somali handicraft may be found in the following publications and their bibliographies: Bonanni (1960), Bartoli Ciruzzi (1988b), Bonanni (1960), Borel (2001), Giuntini (2001), Grottanelli (1965 and 1968), Lanza (1988), Manca (1989), Ministero delle Colonie (1927), Mori (1935), Museo dell'Uomo (1964), Ninni (1937), Parenti (1949), Pardini (1988), Perricone Viola (1937), Puccioni (1935, 1936a, 1936b, 1937a, 1937b), Rèvoil (1885), Soprintendenza Speciale al Museo Preistorico ed Etnografico (1980), Vannutelli & Citerni (1899), Wickenburg (1899), and Zavattaro (2001).

Almost all botanical data derive from Senni (1935), whose mostly obsolete nomenclature is followed, in parentheses, by comments kindly sent to us by Dr. Marcello Tardelli (Tropical Herbarium, Natural History Museum of the University of Florence). Many data on the Somali people may be found in Caniglia (1935).

**Sinugif (Sinujif)** (08°30'N–48°59'E; Nugaal Region, northern Somalia, fig. 1)

- N. 1. Wooden milk vase with lid (fig. 2a), collected in Sinugif, a village with less than one hundred inhabitants. The external surface of the vase is decorated with geometrical engravings. The lid has the same conical form of the vase and the two halves of the object are symmetrical. Date: 1969. Mea: 482 x 205 x 205 mm. Cn. 33890.

**El Bur ('Eel Buur)** (04°40'N-46°37'E; Galguduud Region, central Somalia, fig. 1)

Somalia is known to produce small quantities of sepiolite [Meerschaum: Mg<sub>4</sub>Si<sub>6</sub>O<sub>15</sub>(OH)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O]. The Galguduud Region mineral industry makes a small contribution to the country's general economy. The village of El Bur is peopled by a few hundred Somalis, who produce sepiolite ornamental domestic and zoomorphic objects.

- N. 2. Sculpture in sepiolite representing a Dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius* L.) (fig. 2b; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 47, No. 27). Date: 1973. Mea: 215 x 43 x 178 mm. Cn. 33886.

- N. 3. Incense-burner in sepiolite, called idin or dabqaad, used for various perfumes, especially incense (fig. 2c; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 47, No. 25, F. 24); the item actually has been made in Mogadiscio,

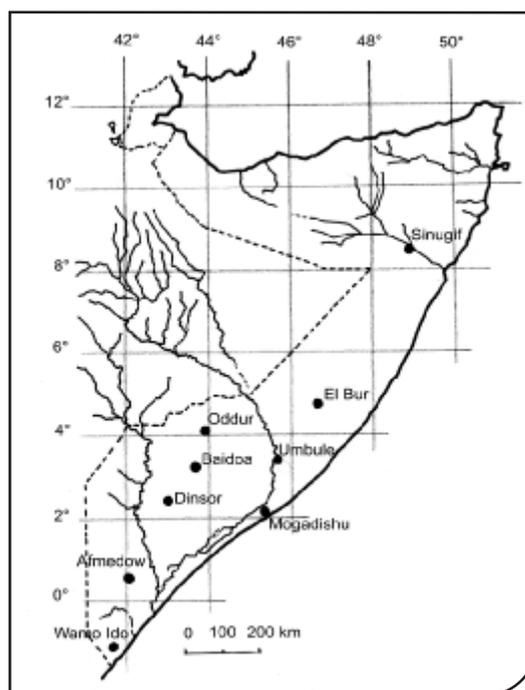


Fig. 1. Map of Somaliland and part of Ethiopia.

but according to the El Bur's style. Incense, widely used in Somalia, is the gum resin produced by the trunk of several species of saplings and trees of the genus *Boswellia* (family Burseraceae), growing in the tropical rocky areas from Ethiopia to India; the most important species are the northern Somali mor medduc (*B. carteri* Birdw. synonym of *B. sacra* Fluck, which produces the incense luban medovi) and the endemic maidi (*B. freereana* Birdw., which produces the incense luban meiti); Date: 1973. Mea: 140 x 65 x 90 mm. Cn. 33888.

- N. 4. Jug-shaped container in sepiolite, decorated with fretwork (fig. 2d; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 47, No. 26); merely ornamental function. Date: 1973. Mea: 220 x 167 x 920 mm, height without lid: 175 mm. Cn. 33887.

**Oddur (Huddur Hadama; Xuddur)** (04°10'N-43°53'E; Bakool Region, central Somalia, fig. 1)

The statuettes from Oddur, a small town of about 2,500 inhabitants (years 1930), are inspired specially by animal figures, engraved in a pale light wood called hagar (*Commiphora campestris* Engler, fam. Burseraceae; a name of problematic taxonomic attribution) (Bonanni, 1960). Their characteristic is the geometrical interpretation of the object represented: thus the body of a Crocodile becomes a cylinder, the head a parallelepiped, the tail a pyramid. To obtain geometrical designs on the surface, the sculptures are coloured with a natural brick-red vegetal pigment called hassal (Bonanni, 1960), maybe deriving from *Suaeda fruticosa* Forssk. (now *S. vermiculata*

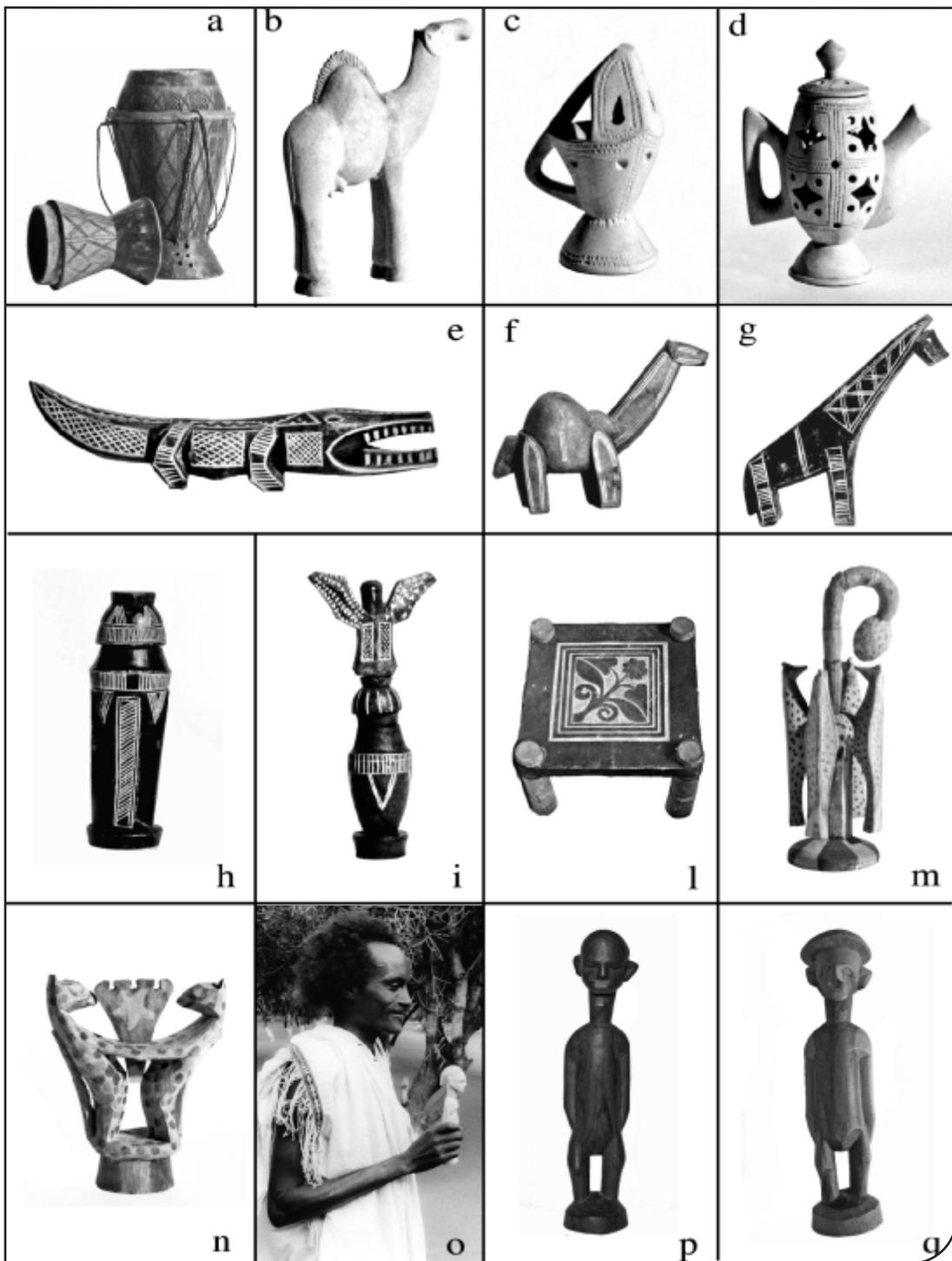


Fig. 2. a) Sinugif. See object No. 1. b) El Bur. See object No. 2. c) El Bur. See object No. 3. d) El Bur. See object No. 4. e) Oddur. See object No. 5. f) Oddur. See object No. 6. g) Oddur. See object No. 7. h) Oddur. See object No. 8. i) Oddur. See object No. 9. l) Umbule. See object No. 10. m) Baidoa. See object No. 11. n) Baidoa. See object No. 12. o) Barrèke, a Digil Dabarre of Dinsor, showing his statuette (No. 15 in the text; see also fig. 3a). p) Dinsor. See object No. 13. q) Dinsor. See object No. 14.

Forssk.), a shrub of the family Chenopodiaceae, whose wood has a lot of vessels full of a reddish gum resin.

- N. 5. Zoomorphic sculpture representing a Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus* Laurenti) (fig. 2e; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 22, F. 27) carved in wood and decorated with the above - mentioned technique. Date: 1973. Mea: 88 x 52 x 320 mm. Cn. 33881.

- N. 6. Zoomorphic sculpture representing a Dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius* L.) (fig. 2f; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 47, No. 23) carved in wood, coloured and decorated as the object No. 5. Date: 1973. Mea: 180 x 66 x 240 mm. Cn. 33882.

- N. 7. Zoomorphic sculpture representing a Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata* de Winton) (fig. 2g; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 47, No. 24), coloured and decorated as the object No. 5. Date: 1973. Mea: 235 x 47 x 230 mm. Cn. 33883.

- N. 8. Carved wood container with lid (fig. 2h; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 20), called dil, coloured and decorated as the object No. 5. The shape is the general one proper of the milk-pot, but its small measures suggest that this is an ornamental object. Date: 1973. Mea: 255 x 83 x 83 mm. Cn. 33884.

- N. 9. Ornamental sculpture in wood (fig. 2i; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 21), composed of two joined pieces, coloured and decorated as the object No. 5. The inferior piece looks like a milk-pot, the superior one represents a bird, maybe an eagle with open wings. Date: 1973. Mea: 340 x 160 x 73 mm. Cn. 33885.

**Umbule** (03°11'N-45°34'E; Shabeellaha Dhexe region, southern Somalia, fig. 1)

A very small village flanking the lower course of the Webi Shebeli River, a region inhabited by nomadic Somali people and sedentary black populations of agriculturists and hunters.

- N. 10. Stool with frame and legs made in wood and seat in bovine leather (fig. 2 l). A floral decoration on the leather is obtained by scraping off the coat following a design, to produce also a chromatic effect. Date: 1962. Mea: 280 x 390 x 390 mm. Cn. 33880.

**Baidoa (Baydhabo)** (03°04'N-43°38'E; Bay region, southern Somalia, fig. 1)

Baidoa is one of the most important and populous Somali town, with about 10,000 inhabitants (years 1930).

- N. 11. Polychrome wood sculpture representing four birds on a plant of durra with pendulous cob (a taxon of the genus *Sorghum*; family *Graminaceae*) (fig. 2m; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 18), a plant with edible grains, largely cultivated in tropical and subtropical countries. The sculpture, of a very lightweight and pale wood, is decorated with synthetic orange and dark violet colours, now faded

by the light. Date: 1978. Mea: 247 x 85 x 75 mm. Cn. 33891.

- N. 12. Polychrome wood sculpture representing the coat of arms (fig. 2n; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 19) of the Somali Democratic Republic: two rampant Leopards (*Panthera pardus* L.) flanking a white five-pointed star on a sky-blue field. Same type of wood of No. 11, decorated with orange, dark violet, blue green and sky-blue, at least partly synthetic pigments, now faded by light. Date: 1978. Mea: 200 x 162 x 60 mm. Cn. 33892.

**Dinsor (Diinsoor)** (02° 24'N-42° 59'E; Bay region, southern Somalia, fig. 1)

This village with about 500 inhabitants (years 1930; presently about 20,000) is an important market place of the Bay region, where up to a few years before the time of collecting there was no former original tradition of wood carving. Thanks to the suggestion of the UNESCO Mexican operator Barrera Vasquez, who was in charge of education of the masses, some people undertook activities in handicraft and commerce to have an additional source of income (Lanza, 1988). Statuettes representing human beings show a rather stocky physique, very different from the typical one of local slender-bodied and long-limbed people; the items Nos. 13-17 were carved by a man called Barèkke (fig. 2o), belonging to the Digil Dabarre, a Somali group considered of low-ranking by the Somali themselves as not practising pastoral farming and more or less hybridized with blacks Bantu.

The human and animal statuettes from Dinsor are all made with the hard and heavy wood of a shrub, up to 4 m high, called emir, mermerdot, mormordu and marmardole (Senni, 1935) or marmaradoli (Bonanni, 1960) (*Randia fiorii* Chiov., fam. Rubiaceae, currently *Gardenia fiorii*). In the collections from Afmedow (see further on, also for the origin of local carving activity) and Dinsor we found also some carvings of ginni, dancing "little devil acrobats" balancing on a steady cylindrical base. This kind of dancing statuettes is typical of almost all Asian cultures. We can find beautiful examples from western Africa to Indonesia, made with different materials: wood, bone, ivory, iron and silver.

- N. 13. Statue, wood carving representing a man, standing on a circular pedestal, arms stretched along the hips, sexual attributes not clearly shown (fig. 2p; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 15, F. 26, left). Date: 1962. Mea: 270 x 67 x 42 mm. Cn. 33874.

- N. 14. Statue (see also No. 21), wood carving representing a man, standing on a circular pedestal, arms stretched along the hips (fig. 2q; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 14, F. 26, center). The carving of the head shows the typical local mushroom-shaped hairstyle (it does not represent a hat!). Also in this case, sexual attributes are not shown. Date: 1962. Mea: 235 x 57 x 53 mm. Cn. 33875.

- N. 15. Statue (see also No. 21), wood carving representing a woman standing on a circular pedestal, arms stretched along the hips, sexual attributes evident and nipples and pupils clearly marked with a gray pencil (fig. 3a; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 13, F. 26, right). Date: 1962. Mea: 210 x 62 x 55 mm. Cn. 33876.

- N. 16. Ginni (= devil), a wood carved mobile toy, formed by a round support on which stands a stylized human figure whose "body" balances two lateral counterbalances (fig. 3b; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 16). The human figure has the same features as the preceding statues. Date: 1962. Mea: 190 x 58 x 52 mm. (the support), 150 x 30 x 30 mm. (the ginni), 265 x 255 x 41 mm. (the ginni with counterbalance). Cn. 33879.

- N. 17. Wood carving representing a Warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus* Pallas) (fig. 3c; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 17); see No. 21 for the type of wood. Date: 1962. Mea: 62 x 34 x 105 mm. Cn. 33878.

- N. 18. Headrest carved in a single block of hard wood, with elaborated decorations engraved along the sides (fig. 3d, e). Date: 1962. Mea: 170 x 155 x 80 mm. Cn. 33877. This piece of refined workmanship is an example of the so called "Azanian art" (from a medieval Arabic term meaning "Land of Zanj", i.e. "Land of the Blacks", relating to the coast of East Africa and adjacent islands), a typical style widespread along the eastern African littoral. The "Azanian art" is an expression of the cultures introduced by immigrants from various regions of the Arabian peninsula, the Persian Gulf coasts, southern Iran, south-western India and, to a lesser degree, from Indonesia and China. The Azanian style is characterized by several types of elaborate engravings, as dots, circles, cross-hatchings and Solomom's knots, inside band, triangles, etc.

Various objects of our Museum, all in Azanian style, are comparable to this headrest. Four fandal, i.e. spoons with extremely fine carvings, two collected by Paolo Mantegazza in 1881 at Aden (Yemen) (fig. 3f; Cn. 2892 and 2892/1), a third one purchased at Aden in 1901 by the Naval Officer Erasmo Ehrenfreund (Cn. 8130), the last one collected in Somalia by Vittorio Böttger in 1893 (Cn. 12362). Two combs with decorated handles collected at Akaka, south of Bardera, in 1913 during the Stefanini-Paoli Expedition (Cn. 15333 and 15335). Lastly a headrest made in Mijurtein but obtained by Nello Puccioni at Kismayo in the year 1935 (Cn. 29465).

Among the objects collected at Dinsòr, the item No. 18 is the most ancient one and probably more an art and luxury object than a daily utensil; it is a perfect example of the best Somali traditional wood carving.

**Mogadishu (Muqdisho)** (02°03'N-45°22'E; Banaadir region, central Somalia, fig. 1)

- N. 19. The only object coming from the capital of Somalia is a cup with spoon, both carved in light wood (fig. 3g). The cup has a long handle and a circular foot. Date: 1973. Mea: 110 x 142 x 27 mm. Cn. 33889.

**Wamo Ido (neighborhood of -)** (about 12 km as the crow flies WSW of Bad Adda = Baddàda or Badàdda, about 01°00'N-41°30'E; Jubbada Hoose region, southern Somalia, fig. 1)

This region bordering Kenya is still inhabited by agriculturists and hunters of Bantu origin, divided in different ethnical groups. The following object was made by one of them, the Waboni; its interest lies in that it witnesses the survival of the Waboni minority's craftsmanship in a predominant Somali population and culture.

According to Lanza, who reached the locality at night, the people he came across was a seemingly relict group made up of only three-four families. They gave a warm welcome to the members of expedition, in honour of whom some children performed some characteristic dances, among the others a very amusing "monkeys' dance" (see also Puccioni, 1937b, pp. 86-90, on the Bantu coreographies of Jilib, on the Jubba River, inspired by the animals).

- N. 20. Stool, made in a single piece of lightweight, pale wood, with round seat and four legs joined together at the base and forming a square platform (fig. 3h). Date: 1962. Mea: 240 x 315 x 315 mm. Cn. 33894.

**Afmedow (Afmadoow)** (00° 31'N - 42°04' E, Jubbada Hoose region, southern Somalia, fig. 1)

Afmedow, a small town with about 2,000 inhabitants (1938), was well-known in the region for the presence of expert wood carvers, who produce small anthropomorphic and zoomorphic sculptures. As early as the year 1935, the Nello Puccioni Expedition collected 15 wood carvings: 6 anthropomorphic statuettes (Cn. 29381-29385; 29505); two spoons; a knife and a fork, all with anthropomorphic handles (Cn. 29386, 29504, 29507, 29598); a knife with no decorations on the handle (cat. 29503); lastly four zoomorphic statuettes representing a Lion, a Giraffe, a Crocodile and an Elephant (Cn. 29511-29514). The artisans who made these objects were the brothers Adesso and Iarusso Dane, Waboni of the Bon Duret Kabyle, of whom art Puccioni (1937b) writes "L'origine di questa arte non è spontanea, e tanto meno di tratta di un uso tradizionale nel gruppo; come a Bur Hacaba il suggerimento è venuto dai bianchi. Fra i Suaheli del Kenia l'uso di scolpire statuette umane di legno è molto comune e di tali statue un certo numero arriva, portato dai commercianti, fino a Chisimaio e Afmadù. Queste sculture furono date come modello ai due fratelli Dane, invitandoli a riprodurle e l'esperimento riuscì tanto bene che la fabbricazione di queste figure andò rapidamente moltiplicandosi. In realtà accadde qui,

come del resto a Bur Hacaba, che una volta avuto lo spunto, gli artisti svilupparono per proprio conto la loro arte e si sbizzarrirono in temi da loro spontaneamente creati". The style is different from the specimens collected by B. Lanza almost thirty year later. In Puccioni's material the human figure, both male and female, is very stylised, with a small and always hairless head, receding forehead, protruding eyes, scarcely pronounced prognathism, head usually turned laterally and wide and squarish shoulders over a flat chest, invariably adorned with small geometrical designs; abdomen and buttocks are enhanced and the legs are unduly muscular as compared to the thin arms; the statuettes are small, their height varying from 190 and 244 mm. Those collected by Lanza in 1962 are more slender, the proportions head-trunk-members are more realistic, as well as the features of the face, barely suggested rather than strongly stylized; female heads have a special hair style, while the body has no decorations. The style of the zoomorphic items collected by Puccioni in 1935 and those collected by Lanza in 1962 are different. Among Puccioni's items, the Lion is the animal represented more realistically, while the elephant is extremely stylized insomuch that the entire body is represented almost as a single volume (fig. 3i, Cn. 29514). The same artisans produced both the anthropomorphic and the zoomorphic statuettes, however the former ones reproduce the human figure according to the above-mentioned canonical rules, while the zoomorphic carvings are stylistically varied and do not seem to follow definite rules. The stylistical variety of the animal statuettes could be interpreted as an attempt of the artisans to experiment with different interpretations of the animals figure. In Lanza's collection, animals such as the Zebra and the Leopard are barely sketched, while others such as the Warthog and the Elephant are rendered more realistically. Noticeable differences could also be due to different carvers.

In Lanza's collection there are 12 object from Afmedow: three anthropomorphic and seven zoomorphic statuettes, and two ginni (see Nos 16, 24 and 25).

The sculptures from Afmedow are carved in different kinds of wood, either heavy, hard and compact or light and soft. Some of the hard ones may belong to the following genera: *Terminalia* (fam. Combretaceae), as the bessec (*Terminalia ruspolii* Engler et Diels, currently *Terminalia orbicularis* Engl. & Diels) and the careri (*Terminalia holstii* Engler); Acacia (family Mimosaceae); *Piptadenia* (fam. Mimosaceae), as the dei-dei (*Piptadenia erlangery* Harms, currently *Newtonia erlangery* Harms Brenan); *Cordia* (fam. Boraginaceae), as the marer (*Cordia gharaf* Forssk., Ehrenb. var. *quercifolia* Klotz.) Fiori (currently synonymized with *Cordia sinensis* Lam.); *Randia*, as the emir or marmardole (*Randia fiorii*

Chiov., currently *Gardenia fiorii*, fam. Rubiaceae). According to Puccioni (1937b), the human statuettes were carved in a light yellow, very hard wood, resembling the box, named carro, probably corresponding to the Senni's (1935) above-mentioned careri. Trees with soft wood growing in Somalia and used for small objects are for instance *Tamarix socotrana* Vierhap. (fam. Tamaricaceae, currently synonymized with *Tamarix nilotica* Ehrenb., Bunge), *Thespesia somalica* Chiov. (cobanne, danis; fam. Malvaceae, actually synonymized with *Thespesia danis* Oliv.), *Balanites* cf. *aegyptiaca* Dedlile (collum; fam. Zygophyllaceae), *Commiphora campestris* Engler (hagar; fam. Burseraceae, see Oddür), *Erythrina melanachanta* Taub. (ioh, burà; fam. Leguminosae), as well as the *Salvadoraceae* *Dobera glabra* (Forssk.) Poir and *Dobera macalusoii* Mattei (currently synonymized with *Dobera lorantbifolia* (Werb., Harms), both locally called garass.

- N. 21. Statuette (fig. 3l). Wood carving representing a woman carrying her baby on the back. The figure is highly stylized, showing the physiognomic characteristics of Somali people and, at the same time, the artistic personality of the carver. Note the elaborate hairdo. This statue, as the objects Nos. 14, 15, 17, 22, 23, 30, 31 and 32, is made with a heavy, very hard, dark and light brown wood (*Terminalia*?; see above), with differently coloured inner and outer parts of the trunk. The inner part (duramen), is darker than the outer one (alburnum). The colour difference is exploited to produce an aesthetic chromatic effect (Lanza, 1988). Collector: Dr. Ugo Funaioli. Date: 1954. Mea: 312 x 60 x 50 mm. Cn. 33862.

- N. 22. Statuette (fig. 3m; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 3, F. 22, right) (see also No. 21). Wood carving representing a man standing on his feet without pedestal, arms stretched along the hips. Sexual attributes are evident and, according to Lanza (1988), the different colours of the wood could be deliberately used to point out the glans. Date: 1962. Mea: 365 x 72 x 62 mm. Cn. 33863.

- N. 23. Statuette (fig. 3n; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 2, F. 22 centre) (see also No. 21). Wood carving representing a woman standing on her feet without a pedestal, arms stretched along the hips and a complicate hairdo; sexual attributes evident. Date: 1962. Mea: 330 x 65 x 63 mm. Cn. 33864.

- N. 24. Ginni, a wooden toy as already described under item No. 16 from Dinsòr (fig. 3o; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 4, Fi. 23). In this specimen the human figure standing on the support is extremely stylized. The central column of the support has a square section. Date: 1962. Mea: 235 x 74 x 74 mm (the support), 125 x 33 x 19 mm (the ginni), 215 x 268 x 50 mm (the ginni with counterbalance). Cn. 33872.

- N. 25. Ginni, a wooden toy as the preceding one. In this specimen, the central column of the support

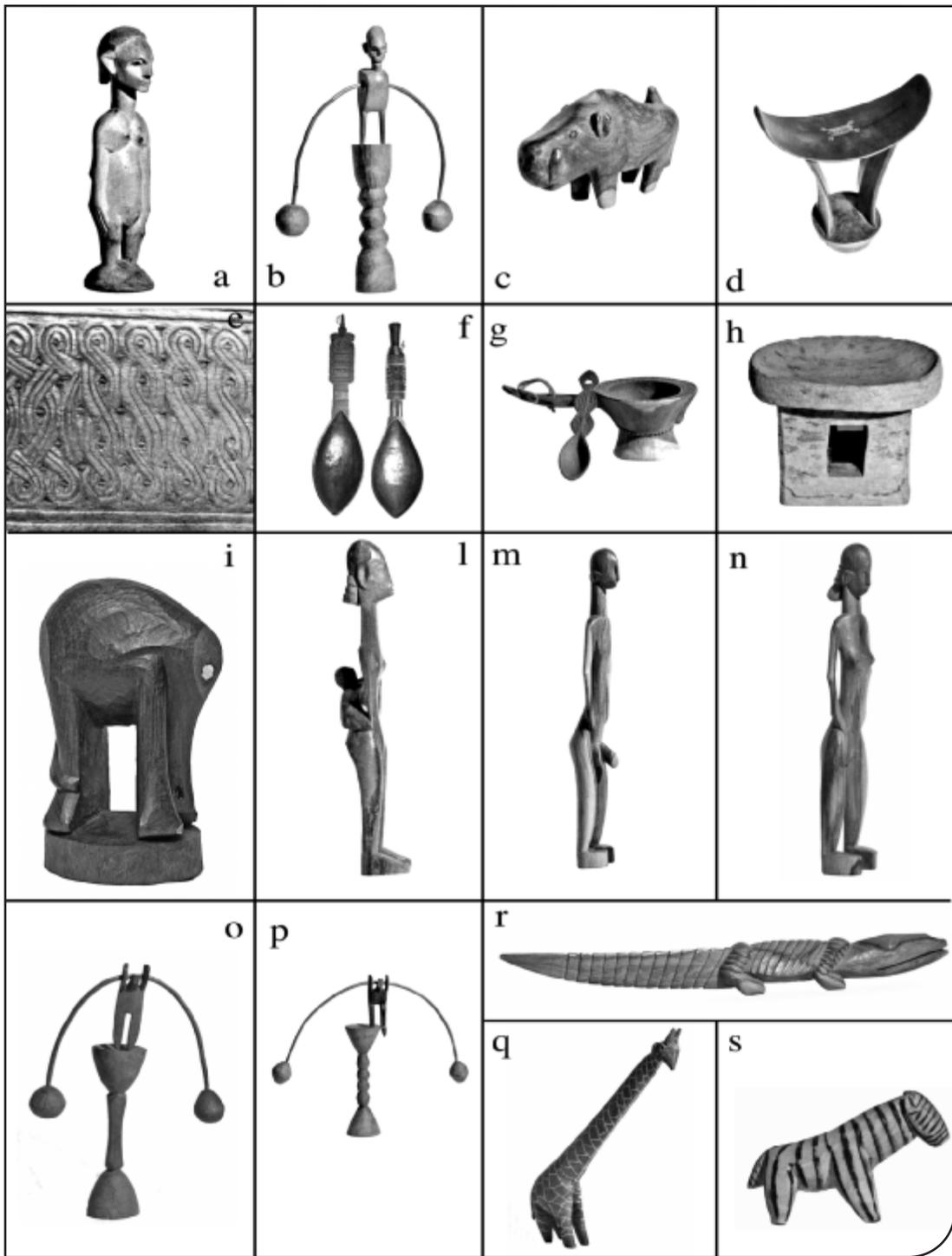


Fig. 3. a) Dinsor. See object No. 15. b) Dinsor. See object No. 16. c) Dinsor. See object No. 17. d) Dinsor. See object No. 18. e) Dinsor. Details of object No. 18. f) Spoons collected by P. Mantegazza in 1881 at Aden. g) Mogadishu. See object No. 19. h) Wamo Ido. See object No. 20. i) Zoomorphic statuette collected by N. Puccioni in 1935. l) Afmedow. See object No. 21. m) Afmedow. See object No. 22. n) Afmedow. See object No. 23. o) Afmedow. See object No. 24. p) Afmedow. See object No. 25. q) Afmedow. See object No. 26. r) Afmedow. See object No. 27. s) Afmedow. See object No. 28.

has a rounded section (fig. 3p). Date: 1962. Mea: 186 x 55x 51 mm (the support), 106 x 29 x 19 mm (the ginni), 184 x 342 x 34 mm (the ginni with counterbalance). Cn., 33873.

- N. 26. Zoomorphic statuette representing a Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata* de Winton) (fig. 3q; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 11), carved in a very lightweight and soft wood. The sculpture was coloured with henna and the design obtained by engraving the surface with a pointed scraper to show the underlying natural light wood colour. Date: 1962. Mea: 500 x 85 x 518 mm. Cn. 33865.

- N. 27. Zoomorphic statuette representing a Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus* Laurenti) (fig. 3r; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 5), made with a hard, heavy, light brown wood. Date: 1962. Mea: 66 x 59 x 515 mm. Cn. 33866.

- N. 28. Zoomorphic statuette representing a Grant's Zebra (*Equus burchellii boehmi* Matschie) (fig. 3s; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 10), carved in a whitish, very lightweight and soft wood. The black stripes are obtained by pyrography, streaking the wood with a heated tool. Date: 1962. Mea: 130 x 50 x 210 mm. Cn. 33867.

- N. 29. Zoomorphic statuette representing a Leopard (*Panthera pardus* L.) (fig. 4a; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 9, F. 25), carved in the same type of wood of No. 28, with pyrographed spots. Date: 1962. Mea: 78 x 54 x 266 mm. Cn. 33868.

- N. 30. Zoomorphic statuette (fig. 4b; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 8) (see also No. 21) representing a Warthog (*Phacochoerus* sp.). Snout and tusks, notwithstanding rather stylized, produce even so a very realistic effect. Date: 1962. Mea: 65 x 46 x 170 mm. Cn. 33869.

- N. 31. Zoomorphic statuette (fig. 4c; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 45, No. 6) (see also No. 21) representing an African Bush Elephant (*Loxodonta africana* Blumenbach, 1797), whose tusks, obtained from a bone, are inserted and glued into small cavities close to the trunk; left tusk lost. Date: 1962. Mea: 109 x 57 x 175 mm. Cn. 33870.

- N. 32. Zoomorphic statuette (fig. 4d; cf. Lanza, 1988, p. 46, No. 7) (see also No. 21) representing a Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis* L.). Date: 1962. Mea: 70 x 43 x 205 mm. Cn. 33871.

#### Unspecified locality

- N. 33, 34. Two miswak or siwak coming from Somalia (fig. 4e), natural tooth brushes made with twigs, locally called rummi, of *Salvadora persica* L. (local names aiè, adai, adi, fam. Salvadoraceae), a sapling up to 5 m high, very common all over the Somaliland, with a lightweight and pale yellowish wood. It is scientifically proved that these twigs are really very useful to prevent the decay of the teeth, even if used without any other tooth cleaning device. Date: 1973. Mea: 140 x 15x 15 mm. Cn. 33897; Mea: 110 x 10 x 10 mm. Cn. 33898.

## MATERIAL FROM KENYA

**Kongoni Farm** (About 00°46'S-36°21'E, close to the Lake Naivasha, southern Kenya)

- N. 35. Maasai beaded necklace, made with tiny seed beads red, blue, green and white, with an ante-

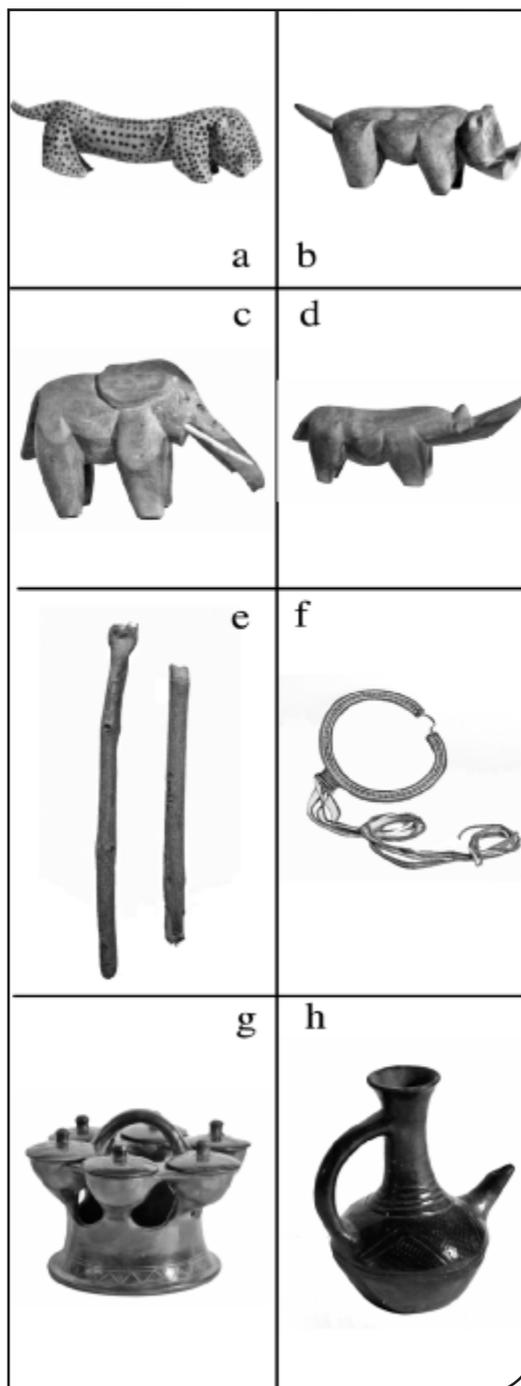


Fig. 4. a) Afmedow. See object No. 29.

b) Afmedow. See object No. 30. c) Afmedow. See object No. 31.

d) Afmedow. See object No. 32. e) Unspecified locality. See

objects Nos. 33 and 34. f) Kongoni Farm, Kenya. See object No.

35. g) Addis Ababa. See object No. 36. h) Addis Ababa. See

object No. 37.

rior, long hanging ornament (fig. 4f). Date: 1968. Mea: 990 x 19,2 x 5 mm. Cn. 33896.

## MATERIAL FROM ETHIOPIA

During the 2th mission organized by the CSFET in 1971, were collected some potteries, mainly kitchen utensils. Traditionally the potter's work was considered in Ethiopia one of the less honourable occupations. This attitude may have been linked with a rigid social structure or, as anthropologists suggest, it may have been related to the magic and secrets of Fire, cause of fear and mistrust.

**Addis Ababa** (09°01'N-38°46'E, Addis Ababa region, central Ethiopia)

The objects Nos. 36-41 are shaped and finished by the potter's hand, dried in the sun and baked in a wood fire. While still hot, they are coated with beeswax to give them a glossy finish and waterproofing.

- N. 36. Lunch-box with six bowls, each with its lid, on a circular base (fig. 4g). Geometrical decorations are engraved on the lids and on the basal edge. Date: 1971. Mea: 260 x 350 x 350 mm. Cn. 33856.

- N. 37. Little jug with geometrical designs (fig. 4h). Date: 1971. Mea: 150 x 135 x 95 mm. Cn. 33857.

- N. 38. Drinking-cup decorated with a Coptic cross engraved under the edge (fig. 5a). This object was broken and repaired. Date: 1971. Mea: 120 x 95 x 95 mm. Cn. 33858.

- N. 39. Little four-ansate amphora-shaped pot with geometrical decorations (fig. 5b). Date: 1971. Mea: 90 x 95 x 95 mm. Cn. 33859.

- N. 40. Little plate with four handles and geometrical decorations engraved on the inner surface (fig. 5c). Date: 1971. Mea: 40x115x115 mm. Cn. 33860.

- N. 41. Ashtray, on a circular base, with geometrical engravings on the inner surface and on the edge (fig. 5d). Date: 1971. Mea: 48x117x117 mm. Cn. 33861.

- N. 42. Fly-flap (fig. 5e) made with the tail of a Guereza and with a handle composed by braided vegetable fibers, used especially by the Coptic clergy during the services. The Guereza (*Colobus guereza* Rüppel) is a highly arboreal, black and white monkey of striking beauty, usually inhabiting the deep montane forests from Nigeria to Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; in this species the white parts of the fur are the beard, a conspicuous mantel extending from the shoulders to the lower back, and a long tuft at the tail tip. Date: 1971. Mea: 560x67x67 mm. Cn. 33895.

**Walako** (about 5 km E of Gondar - Gondar: 12°38'N - 37°27'E)

- N. 43. Zoomorphic black painted piece of pottery representing a Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) (fig. 5f). Date: 1988. Mea: 270x58x192 mm. Cn. 33893. This object is particularly interesting due to its origin. It is a hand-made object of the Falasha

(Falascià in Italian), an originally Jewish community especially living around the Ethiopian city of Gondar and in Tigray, and, at last once, able potters, smiths and goldsmiths. In 1988 Dr. Maria Luisa Puccetti Azzaroli (personal communication, X.2006) found that the Falasha still inhabiting the small village of Walako produced a large number of terracotta objects of the most different types of traditional art, as anthropomorphic and zoomorphic statuettes. The Falasha speak the same language and have the same features as the Ethiopians, but follow Hebraism. According to some historians these community derives from the fusion of autochthonous Africans and Jewish refugees who escaped to the Horn of Africa when Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 b.C by the Assyrian-babylonian and again during later waves of the Hebrew diaspora. In the Amarian language "Falasha" means "foreigner", while these black Jewishes call themselves "Beta Israel", i.e. "Home of Israel". Following famines and repressions,

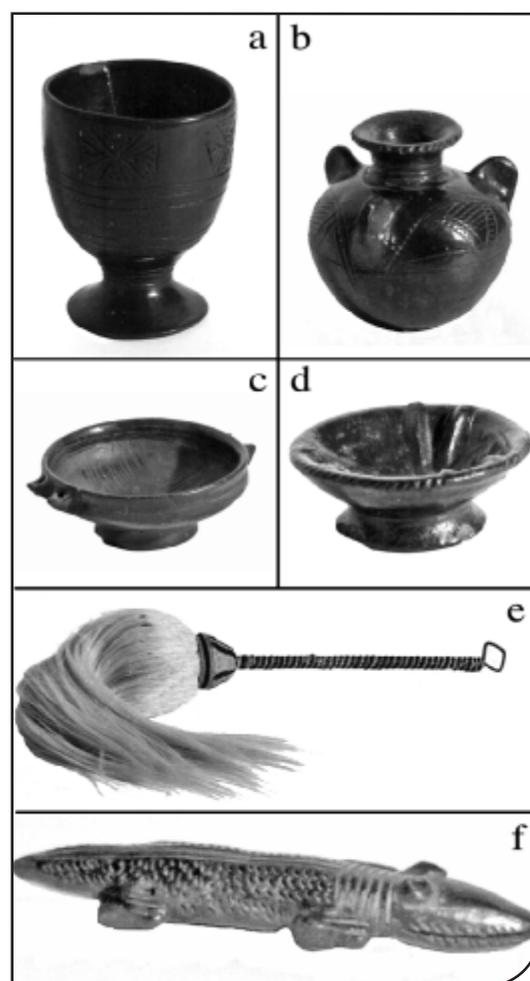


Fig. 5. a) Addis Ababa. See object No. 38.

b) Addis Ababa. See object No. 39. c) Addis Ababa.

See object No. 40, d) Addis Ababa. See object No. 41.

e) Addis Ababa. See object No. 42. f) Walako.

See object No. 43.

in the 1980' they migrated to Sudan where they had to face the hostility of Muslim rulers. The government of Israel then decided to take them over by airlift in three operations respectively called "Moses", "Sabah" and "Solomon" (Donini, 1988; Mihaileanu & Dugrand, 2005; Rosselli, 2006).

## CONCLUSIONS

The items collected in Somalia and Ethiopia by Benedetto Lanza represent an interesting collection considering the time when the collection was done (1962-1978), i.e. at a very beginning of a strong increasing of the western influence and the "globalisation", which caused substantial changes in the local traditional culture.

When compared with the Puccioni's material, the wooden statuettes collected at Dinsor are a concrete testimony of the ongoing process of cultural transformation. The names of the artisans who made the wooden sculptures are usually unknown, but the high level of quality workmanship of their production, testifies their artistic ability. Which group of the complex Somali society produced such gifted persons? Were they "noble" nomad shepherds owners of herds, members of the so called "low caste" Somali groups practising both agriculture and pastoral farming, or did they belong to the Bantu minority? Puccioni (1935) suggested that the Somali people had learned the art of wood carving from the Bantu people living along the margins of the two larger rivers, Jubba and Webi Shabeli. This opinion is supported by the fact that the most important production centres are located in central southern Somalia (Oddur, Baidoa, Dinsor, Afmedow) and also because the few artisans whose names are known belong to the Bantu ethnic group.

There are at least three objects of particular interest in the collection. Item No. 18, a headrest from Dinsor, is quite ancient and remarkable for the accurate workmanship, item No. 20, from Wamo Ido, shows the cultural survival of the Waboni people, at last the item No. 43, a witness of the perhaps short-term survival of the Ethiopian Jewish community, as collected soon after the Jewish migration to Sudan and before their return to Israel.

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