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Towards a folk taxonomy of Baskeet songs

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PROJECT

"Documentation of Basketee song, verbal art and ceremonial language" (sponsored by ELDP, 2011-2013)
Background: Rich song traditions are severely threatened by the rapid Protestantisation of the Basketee people

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1 cordophone (*zimbi*)
1 membranophone (*dibba*)
2 idiophones (*d'ok'd'ok'a*, *kora*)
11 aerophones (*zaya*, *shulshula*, *woysa*, *puulla*, *moyza*, *b'ita*, *nookka*, *naassa*, *biilim*, *ultuta*, *diha*)
Lexical note: There is no general term for 'musical instrument' or for a sub-group of musical instruments.

TYPES OF SONGS / MUSICAL PIECES (non-exhaustive list)

Lyre songs (*zimbi*)

named according to their rhythmic patterns, to their initial or recurring phrase, to the name of the major protagonist of the story that the song tells

e.g. *Aakkwase*, *Kaa'ooda*, *Zari Baac'i* (lit. "Lowland Baac'i"), *Gezi Baac'i* (lit. "Highland Baac'i"), *Kaldi Baaba*, *Angiza K'ooshe*, *C'aaggo C'alti*, *Shooda*, *Dogad* (tale about an antelope), *Kani zimba* (lit. "Dog lyre", tale about a dog) etc.

Main function of lyre: Accompanying *gayrints* (eulogies, biographies in verses) or tales.
(However, the lyre is the most versatile Basketee instrument and songs that are sung or played on other instruments are also adapted to the lyre.)

Flute songs (*shulshula*)

played by a female bamboo flute quintet, praise songs (*gayrints*) performed by one or two of the musicians:
Dookki d'aad' (lit. "snail of Dookka") and *Wulluutta*

Flute songs (*woysa*)

played by a sextet of men and/or women
[Repertoire still to be investigated]

Bamboo trumpet songs (*zaya*)

instrumental pieces played by a male bamboo trumpet (*zaya*) trio, members of the potter clans (*Mani*)
5 Weddings songs (*issi zaya*) played during the wedding ceremonies
7 Mourning songs (*yeepi zaya*) during the mourning ceremonies

Mourning songs (*yeepi yetts*)

- Mourning songs of the mourning processions (*korz*) of men, no instrumental accompaniment
e.g. *Zoora*, *Shoossha*, *Harassa* etc.
- Mourning songs, mostly led by women after the morning ceremonies, associated with different dances
e.g. *Lameyssa*, *Hu'e*, *Shiippe*, *Hallale*, *Lawwase*, *Shoc* etc.

NB: Rattles (of men) and bells (of women) accompany the expression of condolences during the mourning ceremonies. Wind instruments (*moyza*, *ultuta*, *nookka*, *b'ita*, *naassa*) create the soundscape of the mourning processions (*korz*), but do not accompany the songs.

Wedding songs (*issi yetts*)

mostly performed by women, can be accompanied by lyre (*zimbi*), flute (*shulshula*) and drum (*dibba*), named after their initial or recurring phrase

e.g. *Sibaako Siwaane*, *Boolime*, *Bolade* (*Ashamo*), *Alambushe*, *Laalli polide*, *Beeri-Beero*, *Hay yeendiko hay yeebe*, *Wodee ekkaz bazin bayye*

Work songs

e.g. *Gaash wattsiire* '(we) sow tef', *Keetts tookkiire* '(we) carry a roof', *Mos bukkiire* '(we) thresh sorghum', *Kootts koottiire* '(we) break the soil'

Lexical notes

There is no general term for 'song' or 'musical piece'.
yetts'ide 'sing (a wedding/mourning) song', *yetts kesside* 'lead a song' (lit. "take out a song"),
yetts kooshide 'follow (a lead singer or lead instrument)'

