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# Body part nouns in Kambaata: Semantic extensions and idiomatic uses

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INSTITUT FÜR AFRIKANISTIK, UNIVERSITÄT ZU KÖLN

# 0. Structure of this talk

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## **1. Introduction into Kambaata**

## **2. Twelve selected body parts**

- Basic meaning
- Semantic extension
- Use in idioms

## **3. Summary and Outlook**

# 1. Some background on Kambaata

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CLASSIFICATION, SPEAKER AREA, TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE ...

# 1.1. Classification and Sociolinguistics

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- Afro-Asiatic > Cushitic > ... > Highland East Cushitic
- Speaker Area: Southwest Ethiopia
- Number of speakers: > 600,000 (acc. to 2007 census)
- Medium of instruction in primary schools, taught as a subject in secondary school
- Since 09/2018: B.A. programme on Kambaata at Wachamo University
- Official orthography (used here with minimal modifications)
- Amharic (Semitic): most important 2<sup>nd</sup> language

## 1.2. Typological profile I

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- **Suffixing**, agglutinating-fusional with many portmanteau morphemes
- Head- and dependent-marking
  - 9 nominal cases
  - subject indexing on verbs
- **Strict head-finality**
  - dependent clauses before main clauses
  - main verb or copula = last constituent in a sentence
  - all modifiers (incl. relative clauses) before head noun
- **Phonemic stress**, but no lexical, only grammatical minimal pairs, e.g. *ánganne* (NOM) - *angánne* (ACC) - *anganné* (GEN) ‘(of) our hands’

## 1.2. Typological profile II: Possession

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- If possessor = possessive affix: POSSESSUM-POSSESSOR  
e.g. *ang-á-kk*  
hand-fACC-2sPOSS  
'your hand(s)' (= default construction if possessor pronominal)
- If possessor = noun or independent pronoun: POSSESSOR<sub>GENITIVE</sub> + POSSESSUM  
e.g. *xara'ichch-í*      *godab-á*  
boa-mGEN      belly-mACC  
'the belly of a boa'
- e.g. *kíi*      *lók-k-at*  
2sGEN foot-fNOM  
'your foot/feet' (= usually used for contrast: 'your (and not someone else's) foot/feet')
- No distinction between alienable and inalienable possession

## 1.3. Typological profile III: Spatial relations

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- Static location, goal/direction, path, source are marked by locative cases, e.g. *godab-áan* /belly-mLOC/ ‘in/on/at the belly’
- Relational nouns can express more precise locations
  - Relational nouns are little, if at all, grammaticalised; marked for case; govern genitive nouns e.g.

<i>xara'ichch-í</i>	<i>godab-í</i>	<i>aaz-éen</i>
boa-mGEN	belly-mGEN	inside-mLOC
‘in the belly of a boa (lit. in the inside of the belly of a boa)’		

- Relational nouns do not seem to have grammaticalized from body parts:  
*al-í* ‘top’, *aaz-í* ‘interior, underside’, *mereer-ú* ‘middle’, *bir-íta* ‘front’, *zakk-ú* ‘behind’, *shiin-á* ‘side’ = no formal similarities to body parts synchronically (but systematic comparison with related languages still to be carried out)

## 1.4. Origin of the data

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- Field recordings
- Local written publications
- Elicited data



## 2. Selected body parts

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LEG/FOOT – ARM/HAND – FINGER – HEAD – MOUTH – NOSE – EYE –  
EAR – BACK – BUTTOCKS – BELLY – HEART

## 2. Selected body parts

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- What are the semantic extensions of body parts?
- What is their degree of polysemy?
- In which idioms do we find them?

> In the following: discussion of some body parts with varying degrees of polysemy

## 2.1. *Lokk-áta* (f) ‘leg/foot’ (1)



- Lower extremity of human beings, animals, things (e.g. tables, chairs)
- Unit of length (e.g. for measuring a house)
- (Lower) end of a plot of land – see (12)

(12) (...) *wees-é*      *aaz-íin*      *hígg*      *wees-e-sí*      ***lokk-áan***      *yóo*  
                   enset-fGEN interior-mICP    pass.3mPCO    enset-fGEN foot-fLOC      COP1.3.REL

*annánn-aa*      *annánn-aa*      *kaashsh-í*      *aaz-í*      *áagg-o*  
                   different-mOBL    different-mOBL    plant-mGEN    interior-mACC    enter-3mPFV

‘(...) he passed through the enset (garden) and entered into the (garden of) different plants at the lower end (lit. foot) (of the farm).’ (Kambaatissata 1989: 8.19)

## 2.1. *Lokk-áta* (f) ‘leg/foot’ (2)



- (In schoolbooks:) ‘under’ (attested use: ‘words under a heading’) – NB: *lokk-áta* is not a common translation for under > default: *aaž-íin* (interior-mICP)

(13) *A-hé*      *lokk-áan*      *yóo*      *laag-g-áta*  
 A-mGEN    foot-fLOC   COP1.3.REL   word-PL1-fACC

*B-hé*      *lokk-á=r-iin*  
 B-mGEN    foot-fGEN=NMZp-mICP

*daqq-án-s(-i)*  
 meet.MID-PASS-CAUS1-2sIMP

‘Match the words under (lit. at the foot of) A with those under (lit. of the foot of) B.’ (Kambaatissata 1989: 7.23)

- Idiom: *lokk-áta eecc-* lit. “do (the) feet (for oneself)” = ‘accompany (s.th.)’

"A" he lokkaan yoo laaggata "B" he lokkariin daqqans.

"A"		"B"
_____ 1. Shigigeccu		a. rakku
_____ 2. hangaarsiisu		b. ali itu
_____ 3. wodallisu		c. taaphannos
_____ 4. toqqammos		d. sawwitta
_____ 5. muddu		e. gibu
_____ 6. sazanata		f. mini assii iillu.

*Handwritten note:* rakku (v)

To be checked:  
 Translation  
 effect?

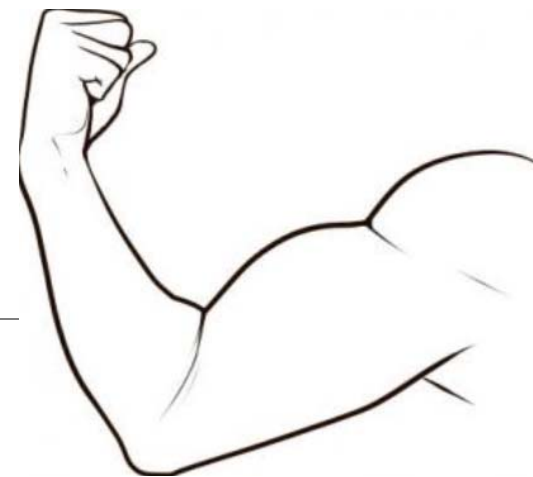
## 2.2. *Ang-áta* (f) ‘arm/hand’ (1)

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- Upper extremity of human beings
- Unit of length
- Quarter,  $\frac{1}{4}$
- Part, fraction (see Treis 2017):

(2)	<i>Agg-ii</i> drink-mDAT	<i>kaa'll-anó</i> help-3mIPV.REL	<i>wó'-u</i> water-mNOM
	<i>xibb-éechch</i> hundred-fABL	<i>mé'-e</i> how_much-fOBL	<i>áng-a?</i> hand-fPRED

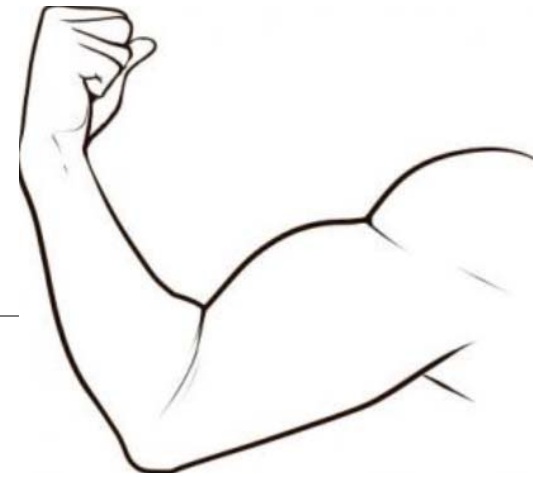
‘What percentage of the water is drinkable (lit. serves as a drink)?’ (Kambaatissata 1989: 7.117)



## 2.2. *Ang-áta* (f) ‘arm/hand’ (2)

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- Idioms (source: Alemu 2017):
  - *ang-áta barg-* lit. “hands” = ‘help, give a helping hand’
  - *ang-á maz-áta* lit. “wound of the hand” = ‘pain in the neck’
  - *ang-áta aass-* lit. “give the hand” = ‘be arrested, be defeated’
  - *ang-áta mar-an-s-* lit. “make the hand walk” = ‘steal’
  - *ang-áta mux-* lit. “be hand-wet” = ‘be (a) good (person)’
  - *ang-áta qamb-* lit. “clap the hand(s)” = 1. ‘clap, applaud’, 2. ‘go crazy’



## 2.3. *Zuru'mm-áta* (f) 'finger, toe'

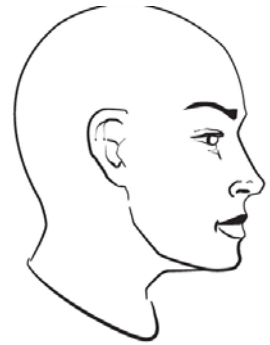
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- Finger on human hand
- Toe on human foot
- Unknown if used with animals > to be checked
- No known semantic extensions
- No known idioms with *zuru'mm-áta*



## 2.4. *Boq-úta* (f)‘head’

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- Head of human being or animal
- Brain
- Idioms:
  - *boq-ó xid-áta* lit. “illness of head” = ‘mental illness’ (but not: ‘headache’)
  - *boq-ó xaw-á* lit. “head word” = ‘title’ (in schoolbooks)
  - *boq-ó maz-áta* lit. “head wound” = ‘very tricky problem’
  - *boq-úta on-* lit. “be empty-headed” = ‘be stupid’
  - *boq-úta xuqq-* lit. “be narrow-headed” = ‘be narrow-minded’



## 2.5. *Af-óo* (m) ‘mouth’ (1)



- Mouth of human being or animal
- Opening (e.g. of a pot)
- Language: *Kambaat-iss-áta* ‘Kambaata language’ (derived **glottonym**) = periphrasis: *Kambaat-í af-óo* lit. ‘mouth of the Kambaata’

(1) *Qakkichch-o laah-í héess-u* (...)  
small-mOBL prince-mGEN story-mNOM

*mat-ú 250 alam-í al-í af-ée=b-a hiir-ámm-ee’u*  
one-mACC 250 world-mGEN top-mACC mouth-mGEN=PLC-mACC release-PASS-3mPRF

‘*The Little Prince* is translated into about 250 (lit. mouth) languages of the world.’ (Saint Exupéry 2018)

- Parts, fractions: *sakkí af-óo* lit. ‘third mouth’ = 1/3 (cf. Treis 2017)

## 2.5. *Af-óo* (m) ‘mouth’ (2)



- Idiom:

- *afóo aphph-* lit. “hold (the) mouth” = ‘be surprised’  
(synonym given in Alemu 2017: 25: *maalal-* ‘be surprised’)

(14) *Téma áchche “M-á cúlu=a’-í bá’-ee-haa*  
now then what-mACC pretty.IDEO=do-3mPCO get\_lost-3mPRF.REL-mCOP2  
*mín-i-la!” af-óo-ssa aphph-itáa’u*  
house-mPRED-? mouth-mACC-3pPOSS seize.MID-3fIPV

(Context: You would have to say to them: “I saw a house that cost \$20,000.”)  
‘Now they would be surprised (and exclaim): “Oh, what a pretty house that is!”’  
(Saint-Exupéry 2018)

## 2.6. *San-úta* (f) ‘nose’ (1)

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- Nose of human being or animal
- Tip, corner of a cloth, a skin; tip, point of a knife, a dagger; end of a rope

(3) *alam-i*      *bizzeenn-i*      *san-óon*      *yóo*      *máanch-uhu-u*  
world-mGEN north-mGEN nose-fLOC COP1.3.REL man.SG-mNOM-ADD  
*muggeenn-i-si*      *san-óon*      *yóo*      *jáal-u-si-i*  
south-mGEN-DEF nose-fLOC COP1.3.REL friend-mNOM-3mPOSS-ADD

‘the man on the North Pole (lit. on the world’s northern nose) and his colleague on the South Pole (lit. on the southern nose)’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)



## 2.6. *San-úta* (f) ‘nose’

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- ...
- A tiny bit (of information)

(4) *Ka*                      *wól-o*                      *plaaneet-i=tann-ée*                      *maax-ámm-ee*  
A\_DEM1.mOBL    other-mOBL    planet-mGEN=NMZ2-mDAT    hide-PASS-3mPRF.REL  
*xah-í*                      *san-úta*                      *kull-o-’é=r-u (...)*  
word-mGEN    nose-fACC    tell-3mPFV-1sO.REL=NMZp-mNOM

‘That he told me a hidden bit of information (lit. a nose of words) about this other planet (...)’  
(Saint-Exupéry 2018)

## 2.6. *San-úta* (f) ‘nose’ (3)

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- Idioms:
    - (Alemu 2017): *san-óochch af-óo* lit. “from the nose to the mouth”  
= ‘only a short distance away’
    - *san-úta iib(b)-* lit. “be nose-warm” = ‘be short-tempered’ (see Treis & Deginet under review)
- (15) *Ís*                    *san-úta*                    *iib-a-a*  
3mNOM    nose-fACC    warm-mPRED-mCOP2  
‘He is short-tempered (lit. nose-warm, warm with respect to the nose).’

## 2.7. *Ill-íta* (f) ‘eye’ (1)

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- Eye of human being or animal
- (Harmful, evil) eye

(16) *ill-e*      *gambá=y-i*  
eye-fOBL meet.IDEO=say-2sIMP  
(Curse:) Lit. “May you encounter eyes!” = ‘May you be harmed!’

- Face

(17) *ill-i-kk*      *áa'll-i*  
eye-fACC-2sPOSS wash.MID-2sIMP  
‘Wash your face (lit. your eyes)!’

## 2.7. *Ill-íta* (f) ‘eye’ (2)



- Seed, grain (e.g. of maize, sorghum, pea, coffee)

(5) *Ku qakkichch-u láah-u qal-ámm he'-ó*  
A\_DEM1.mNOM small-mNOM prince-mNOM be\_born-PASS.3mPCO live-3mPFV.REL  
*plaaneet-áan abbis-s hiil-at haqq-í ill-it*  
planet-mLOC exceed-3fPCO bad-fNOM tree-mGEN eye-fNOM  
*ísensin od-ée ill-it dag-an-tóo 'u*  
i.e. fig\_tree-fGEN eye-fNOM find-PASS-3fPFV

‘On the planet on which the Little Prince was born and lived there were very bad seeds of trees, i.e. seeds of fig trees, found (everywhere).’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

- See also: *ill-é bun-á* lit. “eye coffee” = ‘coffee (made from coffee beans)’ vs. *macc-á bun-á* lit. “ear coffee” = ‘coffee (made from coffee leaves)’

## 2.7. *Ill-íta* (f) ‘eye’

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- (if SG) *ill-ichch-ú* (m):
  - centre (of fireplace)
  - key issue
  - first quality/brew (of *geeshsha*-beer) – Alemu (2017): first brew of coffee
  - investment, capital, funds
- Idioms (Alemu 2017):
  - *ill-é jaal-á* lit. “eye friend” = ‘closest friend’
  - *ill-é xid-áta* lit. “eye illness” = ‘unexpected incident/issue’
  - *ill-íta barg-* lit. “add eye(s)” = ‘1. take a nap, 2. meet for the first time (of in-laws)’
  - *ill-íta laaf-* lit. “be eye-weak” = ‘be shy’



## 2.8. *Macc-áta* (f) ‘ear’

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- Ear of human being or animal
- (Edible) leaf (e.g. tobacco, cabbage, coffee)
- Handle (e.g. of cup, pot)
- Lug (on a clay pot, through which a cord is inserted to carry or hang the pot)
- (Alemu 2017:) fame – see also: *macc-áta ba’is*- lit. “spoil the ear” = ‘defame’
- Idioms:
  - *macc-áta uuji*- lit. “drop the ears” = ‘rest’

## 2.9. *Gujj-ú* (m) ‘back’

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- Back of human being or animal
- Use as relational noun (for locations) marginal (Treis 2008: 207):  
*gujj-óon* ‘on the back (= body part)’  
vs. *gujj-ín* ‘in the back (= spatial relation)’

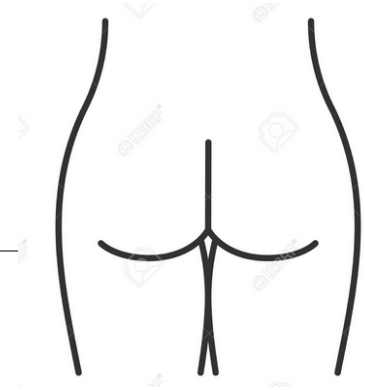
(671) *Mánc*-u      *min-íichch*      ***etar-íinee-t***      ~ ***gujj-íinee-t***  
man(.SG)-M.NOM house-M.ABL      outside-M.ICP.VV-COP3      ~ back-M.ICP.VV-COP3  
~ ***zakk-íinee-t***.  
~ after-M.ICP.VV-COP3  
The man is behind the house.

> common in spatial *and* temporal contexts: *zakk-ín* (after-mICP) / *etar-ín* (outside-mICP) ‘behind’



## 2.10. *Fagaar-á* (m) ‘buttocks’

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- Buttocks of human being
- Foot (of a tree)
- Source, root, origin, base, clan
- (Alemu 2017:) future
- (Alemu 2017:) *fagar-áan* buttocks-mLOC ‘1. under, 2. behind’ > not attested in my data, to be checked
- (Alemu 2017:) Idiom
  - *Fagaar-beel-ú* lit. “one without buttocks” = 1. without a base, 2. unavailable, 3. alien’

## 2.11. *Godab-á* (m) ‘belly’ (1)



- Belly of human being or animal
- Belly as seat of compassion
  - see the idiom *godab-á*-POSS *it-* lit. ‘eat somebody’s belly’ = ‘move somebody to pity, trigger pity in someone’ (Subject: person who is pitied)

(6)     ***Godab-á-****'i*                      *ít-teente-**'e*  
belly-mACC-1sPOSS   eat-2sPRF-1sO

(Context: Snake considers the Little Prince too weak to live on the rocky earth and believes that he is homesick.) ‘You move me to pity (lit. you have eaten me, my stomach).’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

## 2.11. *Godab-á* (m) ‘belly’ (2)

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- Idioms (Alemu 2017):

e.g.

- *godab-á fayy-* lit. “be belly-healthy” = ‘be kind’
- *godab-á qaar-* lit. “be belly-hard” = ‘be cruel’
- *godab-í manch-ú* lit. “belly man” = ‘close friend’
- *godab-íichch ba’umburu* lit. “things that do not disappear from the belly” = ‘things that are engraved on your heart, memory, mind’ (cf. *wozan-á* ‘heart’ as seat of reason and memory)

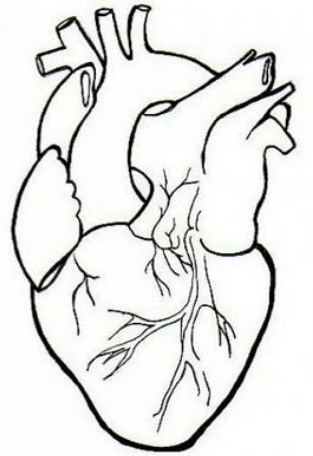
## 2.12. *Wozan-á* (m) ‘heart’ (1)

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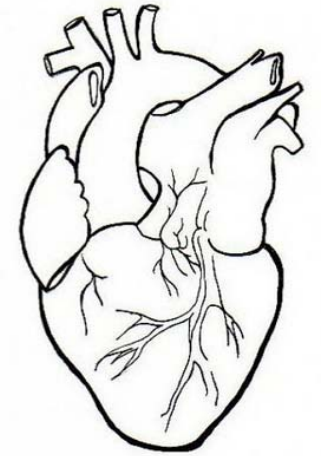
- Heart of human being or animal
- Heart as seat of reason, creativity, memory
- Reason, intelligence, brains, judgement:

(7) *Magán-u      wozan-á      áass-u-kk*  
God-mNOM heart-mACC give-3mBEN-2sO

(Mother to misbehaving child:) ‘May God give you reason (lit. a heart)!’ (Fn2018\_Observed)



## 2.12. *Wozan-á* (m) ‘heart’ (2)



- Heart of human being or animal
- Heart as the seat of reason, creativity, memory
- Creativity: lit. “raise from s.o.’s heart” = ‘invent (e.g. a story)’

(8) (...) *mánn-u* *kabár* *abbíshsh* *isú* *qaag-ano-sii*  
people-mNOM today exceed.3mPCO 3mACC remember-3mIPV-3mO.REL.NMZ1a.mNOM

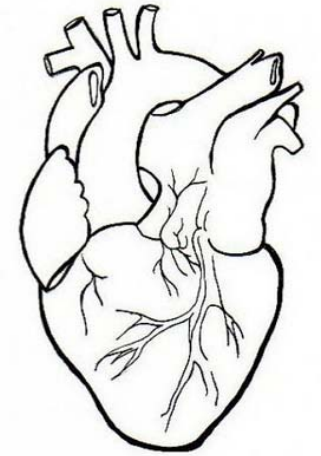
*Qakkichch-ú* *Laah-á* *y-eemó* *wozan-iichchi-s*  
little-mACC prince-mACC say-3honIPV.REL heart-mABL-3mPOSS

*ke'-ishsh* *xaaff-ó* *heess-iin-ta-see-t*  
get\_up-CAUS1.3mPCO write-3mPFV.REL story-mICP-L-3mO.VV-COP3

‘People remember him best for the story that he has created (lit. the story that he wrote lifting it up from his heart).’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

Also cf. Amharic

## 2.12. *Wozan-á* (m) ‘heart’ (3)



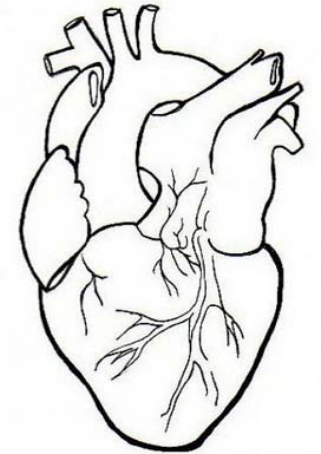
- Heart of human being or animal
- Heart as the seat of reason, creativity, memory
- Memory: lit. “come into one’s heart” = ‘be recalled, remember s.th. by s.o.’

(10) *Hítta*                      *j-áata*        *xón*        *qakkíchch-u*    *láah-u*            *y-ée*  
A\_DEM2.fACC    time-fACC    earlier    small-mNOM    prince-mNOM    say-3mPFV.REL  
*láag-at*            *wozan-áan-ta-'i*    *wáal-t-íyan*        (...)  
word-fNOM    heart-mLOC-L-1sO    come-3fPCO-DS

‘At that time I remembered the words that the Little Prince had pronounced (lit. the words came into my heart) ...’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)



## 2.12. *Wozan-á* (m) ‘heart’ (4)



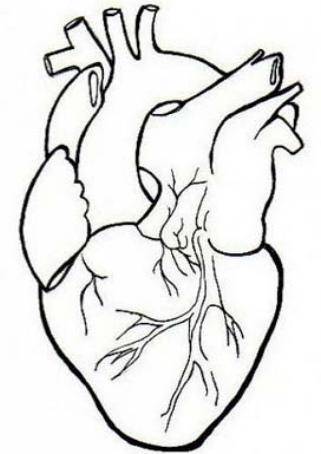
- Heart of human being or animal
- Heart as seat of reason, creativity, memory
  - Memory: lit. “place s.th. into one’s heart” = ‘memorize s.th.’

(11) (...) *misil-á-s*                      *wozan-áan-ta-'nne*                      *afuushsh-aqq-itéenunta*  
         picture-mACC-3mPOSS    heart-mLOC-L-2pPOSS    place-MID-2pPURP.DS  
  
*kaa'll-áno-'nne*    *y-í=ké'i*                      *barg-i*                      *ke'-ishsh-een-ki'nne*  
help-3mIPV-2pO    say-3mPCO=SEQ    add-3mPCO    get\_up-CAUS1-1sPFV-2pO

‘I have drawn the picture again, telling (myself) that this would help you (p) to remember it (lit. place it for yourself into your heart).’ (Saint-Exupéry 2018)

## 2.12. *Wozan-á* (m) ‘heart’ (5)

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- Heart of human being or animal
- Heart as seat of reason, creativity, memory
- Heart as seat of compassion (certain **overlap** with *wozan-á* ‘belly’ – see above) – see idioms in Alemu (2017), e.g.
  - *wozan-á duud-* lit. “be heart-deaf” = ‘have a heart of stone’
  - *wozan-á fayy-* lit. “be heart-healthy” = ‘be tender-hearted’
  - *wozan-á maxal-* lit. “be heart-pure” = ‘be as good as gold’
  - *wozan-á mool-* lit. “be heart-dry” = ‘be heartless’

but:

- *wozan-beel-ú* lit. “heartless” = ‘thoughtless, [unreflecting]’ = Heart as seat of reason

# 3. Summary and outlook

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LEG/FOOT – ARM/HAND – FINGER – HEAD – MOUTH – NOSE – EYE –  
EAR – BACK – BUTTOCKS - BELLY – HEART

# Summary and outlook

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- No grammaticalisation of body part terms apparent in Kambaata
- Marginal use of body parts as relational nouns (but if used, then always less common than relational nouns without body part origin) – see ‘foot’, ‘back’, possibly ‘buttocks’
- No use of body parts in expressions of possession (as e.g. in many other African languages where ‘be in s.o.’s hand’ = ‘possess’)
- No use of body parts (e.g. ‘head, body’) in reflexive constructions – Kambaata has a middle(-reflexive) verbal derivation and an emphatic reflexive *gag-á* ‘self’ (not the physical but the psychological, social self, see also *gag-á* ‘kin, person who is like oneself’)

# Summary and outlook

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- Some metaphorical extensions of body parts, some idioms, but nothing very unusual from a European perspective
- Hardly any use of body parts in expressions of emotion, for which Kambaata mostly uses verbs e.g. *kichche*’- ‘be(come) sad’, *amu’rr*- ‘be(come) angry’, *bajig*- ‘be happy’ – note, however, the use of ‘heart’ and ‘belly’ in expressions of emotion

To sum up: Kambaata does actually not look much like an “African” language, if the use of body part nouns is considered ...

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# Abbreviations

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A\_ adjectival, ABL ablative, ACC accusative, ADD additive, BEN benedictive, CAUS causative, COP copula, DAT dative, DEF definite, DEM demonstrative, DS different subject, f feminine, GEN genitive, hon honorific, ICP instrumental-comitative-perlative, IDEO ideophone, IMP imperative, IPV imperfective, L linker, LOC locative, m masculine, MID middle, NOM nominative, NMZ2 nominalization with =*tann*, NMZp nominzalisation with =*r*, O object, OBL oblique, p plural, PASS passive, PCO perfective converb, PFV perfective, PL plulative, PLC place derivation, POSS possessive, PRED predicative, PRF perfect, PURP purposive, REL relative, s singular, SEQ sequential, SG singulative, VV vowel lengthening