A contribution to the documentation of Siwi (Berber) through an annotated folktale

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Summary
The aim of this paper is to contribute to the documentation of the Siwi language (Berber, Egypt), through the transcription and translation of an unpublished folktale, recorded by the author in Siwa (Egypt) in 2018. The main stylistic features of the tale are described in the first part of the paper, while grammatical notes on the language are provided in the footnotes, in order to clarify some passages that could otherwise not be easily understood through the transcription, glosses and translation alone.

1. Introductory remarks
1.1 The aim of this paper is to contribute to the documentation of the Siwi language by presenting an unpublished folktale, transcribed and translated into English, thus incrementing the amount of data available on Siwi that may be useful for further studies on the language, as well as for comparative analysis from both a linguistic and literary point of view. Siwi is a Berber language (Afro-asiatic phylum) spoken in the oases of Siwa and El Qara in Egypt. Almost all speakers are bilingual (Siwi and Arabic). The main oasis, Siwa, is inhabited by over 25,000 people, including non-natives (especially Egyptians coming from other parts of the country).

1.2 The oral literary tradition in Siwa has already drawn the attention of researchers, and especially in the last few years. As far as folktales are concerned, four of are recounted in Laoust (1931: 146-159). Siwi anthropologist Malim (2001) included a number of Siwi folktales and proverbs in his book, but only translated into Arabic. The book has also been translated in other languages. Fourteen folktales collected among men and women from Siwa can be found in Schiattarella 2017. Siwa oral literary tradition is not limited to folktales, but features also other genres, such as proverbs, legends, religious poems, etc. For an overview, see Schiattarella 2019.

1.3 I recorded this 7′56″-long folktale on the 29th of September 2018 at the house of my main consultant. The story was told by his brother, a man in his thirties, to an audience comprised of myself and other family members, both children and adults, who were present in the room. The reason why the narrator decided to tell me this story is interesting: he had been listening to his brother and me for several years and he had always been interested in our transcription sessions. As he knew I was particularly keen to record folktales, he spontaneously offered to tell me one he knew well, and which was meaningful to him because it was a way to
remember his aunt, who used to gather all the children together for storytelling sessions, on winter evenings.¹

1.1. Features of oral folktales

The folktale below follows the structure and features present in other folktales collected in North Africa, and shares fundamental characteristics with them (Bounfour & Merolla 1994: 2082-2084).

Before analysing the main features included in this story, I will summarise the main episodes of the plot. The story is about a girl who is obliged to remain secluded in her house while his father and brother go away for the pilgrimage. During her father’s absence, the girl is approached by ill-intentioned people. Despite the fact that she obeys her father’s instructions and does not let anyone into the house, when her father returns, someone tells him that the girl had gone out several times. The father thinks that the girl has disobeyed him, and tells his son to kill her. The girl’s brother manages to avoid killing his sister and instead leaves her in the desert. The girl survives, marries the son of a king and has seven children. Unfortunately, an evil character, a Christian, kills them all. The woman then flees and reaches a place where an old man teaches her to read the Quran. When the old man dies, she takes his place, dresses like a man and starts reciting the Quran. Many people go to listen to her beautiful voice, including all the people who hurt her in the past. She is then able to tell the truth about her story, exposing the wicked characters and finally returning to her house with her father and husband.

The main features typical of many oral folktales are unsurprisingly also found in this one. I will list some of them here, in order to present Siwi oral literary tradition within a broader frame.

The very first feature is the imprisonment of the girl while the men of the family are away, travelling and, as a consequence of the men being absent, the prohibition to open the door to any stranger. A second topos is the appearance of ill-intentioned characters who try to distract the protagonist from her promises. There are then also the father’s revenge for the injustice he feels he has suffered, and the trick come up with by the girl’s accomplice, in this case her brother.

Another interesting recurring theme is the prominence of the number seven – in this case the protagonist has seven sons (Scelles Millie 2002: 25-26; Lacoste-Dujardin 1970: 91-92 in Kabyle folktales; Schiattarella 2017: tales 3.2, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 for other examples of Siwi tales featuring the number seven) – and the crossdressing imposed on the protagonist when she needs to do something that according to social conventions is not acceptable for a woman - in this case leading and singing prayer. The beauty of the protagonist’s voice, and its fame reaching far, unnamed places, is also a very frequent pattern.

The punishment reserved to wicked characters also contains a recurrent element. Folktales usually end with cruelties: in this tale, the evil characters are burned over a bundle of wood. What is interesting here is that the rich evil-doer (it is not clear who the storyteller refers to) always receives a worse punishment than the poor one, namely being burned over two bundles of wood instead of one.

In general, no reference to a specific time in history or to a particular historical episode is found in Siwi folktales, as in many other folktales. Only on rare occasions is reference to a specific period given in the text (Lacoste-Dujardin 1970:142-145). In Siwi, tales usually start with the formula márra di ‘once upon a time’, referring to an unspecified moment in the past. The rest of the narration proceeds in chronological order and the course of the events flows in linear succession without flashbacks or flash-forwards.

Space is unidentified. Nonetheless, some generic places are mentioned by the storyteller, and are the same often found in other tales as well: the ssuq, the market, which usually represents

¹ I wish to thank here the narrator of this tale and all the speakers of Siwi who have helped me throughout the years I spent conducting my research.
where the main activities take place. It is a space reserved for men, and when a woman spends much of her time there, this often carries a negative connotation (Lacoste-Dujardin 1970:139). Another generic place is the desert, removed from the view of most of the characters; its harshness is not described but inferred by the context, such as, in the tale below, from the fact that the protagonist suffers from lack of food and water. The cave, instead, represents a shelter from danger. In all other instances, such as when the protagonist must escape from the evil Christian, or when people come to hear her beautiful voice recite the Quran, the storyteller always refers to unspecified places and countries (SG šal ‘town’, PL šaliwən).

There are several characters who, one after the other, interact with the protagonist of the story. No detailed description of these characters is given: none of them has a name and physical appearance and personality features are never commented upon by the storyteller (‘non-visuality’, in Kossmann’s terms (2000: 55-59)), except for rare cases where certain attributes are relevant to the story. The story revolves around a girl whose father and brother are mentioned because of the fact that their departure for the pilgrimage is crucial to the events that ensue in the story. The mother of the children is never mentioned. The untrustworthy characters who wrong the protagonist are personified by a passer-by and an old woman, who is defined by the narrator as a bint haram ‘immoral woman’. Old women are usually associated with unfortunate misadventures in these folktales. Later on, the girl meets the emir, son of the king: this kind of meeting usually indicates that something positive is about to happen to the previously unlucky protagonist, as marriage to a noble character constitutes a sort of redressing of her past. The birth of her seven boys only serves as a pretext for the introduction of another wicked character, here personified by a Christian. The last character is an old man, who, contrary to the old woman, is often considered positively in tales, especially for his wisdom.

Religious elements are present throughout the tale and refer not only to Islam, but also to Christianity. The pilgrimage is found in many tales and is often used as a means to justify the absence of the protagonists for a long period of time (Lacoste-Dujardin 1970: 344). What is interesting here is the presence of a Christian, who plays a role similar to that usually associated with the ogre, as he kidnaps and eats the protagonist’s children. Other references to religion are the circumcision of the boys as they come of age, and the recitation of the Quran, which is usually performed by men.

Siwi tales are introduced by an opening formula and end with a closing one. Opening and closing formulas in fact play an important role in tales and usually serve to detach the dimension of reality from that of the imagination and to defend the storyteller from the evil eye that the narration might trigger (Schiattarella 2017: 21-22; 2019: 7470-7471). In the tale analysed here, the speaker only uses an Arabic ending formula, but most times, the two languages mix together, such as in the typical Siwi closing formula: ḥattuta, ḥattuta, qaşṣar ʿsmərha, akəmmus n xer i ənsən, akəmmus n šar i əntənən, literally ‘Tale, tale, it has shortened its span. A bundle of goodness to us, a bundle of sadness to them’, where the first part is in Arabic and the second in Siwi.

It is not rare for some parts of the text, especially verbs, to be repeated in order to connect one episode with another. This is the case in (154-155), (160-161), (190), (198-199) and (202-203) with verbs, where the characters move from one scene to another and from one episode to the other. Another way in which these connections are achieved is through the use of temporal connectives. Several formulaic expressions in Arabic are used to divide the text and establish the temporal frame of the sequence of the episodes. That is why we very often find expressions such as šəwəyətən ‘after a while’ (see (81), (138), (164) and (203)).

The intonation of the speaker’s voice changes throughout the text, in accordance with which character is speaking and with the function of each section of the text. The speaker tries to individually reproduce the voices of all the different characters, and the difference is remarkable when two characters speak to each other, one after the other. The tone is instead more neutral when the speaker narrates the events of the story, but then changes again, with a
raising of the voice, when the speaker is offering a clarification and/or a personal comment on what is happening. See for example (40-41) aggʿid l-yārrayyah ‘The man was not satisfied’; (69) yarfb-ya ‘He was scared’; (116) yoxsā g-ṣiqrb-et yāšni ‘He wanted to grab her’; (169-170) aggʿid šāraf lašmī l-īṣr ‘The old man was blind, he could not see’; (183) abbā-nnos n tərwāwen ‘the father of the children’.

It is not uncommon to find formulas or riddles, sometimes in Arabic, within Siwi tales, which are sung by the protagonists of the story and sometimes repeated several times in the text. In the case of our folktale, we can find an example in (38), where the formula is in Arabic (in square brackets).

<14> Indirect speech is never present in this folktale, as is generally the case in all folktales. Dialogue, on the contrary, is sometimes used in order to create suspense in the story (Kossmann 2000: 63). In our story, suspense is also created by monologues, such as in the passage in (78-80), where the brother asks himself how to react to his father’s request to kill his sister: ga-ɣāṛṣ-ḥ as na lā-ga-ɣāṛṣ-ḥ? māmnk ga-ɣāṛṣ-ḥ i ṣāmlma? “Should I slaughter her or not? How will I slaughter my sister?”

1.2. Structure of the folktale

<15> The entire story can be divided in five main parts:

1) The main characters are presented: a father and his son, who announce their intention to leave for a pilgrimage, and a daughter, who is obliged to wait for them inside the house. The first two wicked characters are introduced, as they try to convince the girl to disobey her father’s orders.

2) The men return from the pilgrimage, the girl is the victim of false accusations which cause her father to order her to be killed. Her brother takes her to the desert, but the girl manages to survive.

3) The girl reaches a far-away place, marries an emir and has seven children. She is again the victim of an evil character, who kills all her children and plans to kill her too.

4) The girl runs away again, finds an old man, starts to recite the Quran and attracts the attention of many people.

5) The girl is reunited with all the characters mentioned before. She is able to tell the truth about her story and to obtain justice, punishing the characters who had wronged her.

Despite the fact that storytelling as a practice has almost disappeared, and that this tale was not told by a professional storyteller (who in the past were usually women who entertained kids with their stories in the evenings), the narrator is able to deliver a coherent and clear plot for the story in each of its parts. This is probably due to the fact that he heard this story many times as a child, confirming the importance of the storytelling ritual in a not so distant past.

2. A Siwi folktale (tanfast)

<16> The following folktale has been transcribed, glossed and translated into English. I decided to mark the end of minor and major intonation units, false starts and hesitations. These elements may well prove useful for further studies. The grammatical notes in the footnotes are meant to clarify some passages that might not immediately be clear from the transcription, gloss or translation alone without a prior knowledge of the language. They will, of course, only cover a small number of features.²

² For a more thorough analysis of different aspects of the Siwi language, the reader might refer to Laoust 1931, Vycichl 2005, Naumann 2012, Souag 2013, Schiattarella 2017, as well as to all the works cited throughout the paper. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.
syllable. When a vowel is long and stressed, only the
and does not depend on the syllable weight. The accent can in fact fall on the last or penultimate
subscribed dot, while in IPA, it is marked by a raised
The symbols used in the examples do not always correspond to the ones used in IPA, namely:
[FS] $[$ ]; $ [ ] ; $ [ ] ; $ [ ] ; $ [ ] ; $ [ ] ; $ [ ] . Moreover, pharyngealization is marked here with a
subscribed dot, while in IPA, it is marked by a raised $ [ ] $. For example: $ $ = b$.  
In this article, the accent has been marked using an acute accent. Accent on nouns in Siwi is not fixed
and does not depend on the syllable weight. The accent can in fact fall on the last or penultimate
syllable. When a vowel is long and stressed, only the length diacritic will be used (ex. á).

3 The symbols used in the examples do not always correspond to the ones used in IPA, namely: $ [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] ; \ddagger \ddagger [ ] . Moreover, pharyngealization is marked here with a

4 In this article, the accent has been marked using an acute accent. Accent on nouns in Siwi is not fixed
and does not depend on the syllable weight. The accent can in fact fall on the last or penultimate
syllable. When a vowel is long and stressed, only the length diacritic will be used (ex. á).
outside, never, do not go out!” She told them:

outside, never, do not go out!”

They left, they closed the door from the outside,

They left her inside.

There was a man who wanted to take the girl.

a woman of ill-repute, she started

No! The man came first,

before the old woman.

The verb ‘to go’ is grammaticalized in Siwi (Schiattarella 2015: 95), like in other Berber languages (Chaker 1997: 110) and is used to express that the action is imminent.
(22) battin wa⁷ i-qārqab battin ?
who DEM.SG.M 3SG.M-knock.IPV who ?
“Who is knocking?”

(23) tə-म्म-ाś:: / niš ʃbər_sabil / 3SG.F-say.IPV.IO.3SG / IDP.1SG passer_by.SG.M /
she said. (The man replied): “I am a passer-by,

(24) xs-ix amán aštəş-á-x-a / want.IPV-1SG water.PL.M be_thirsty.IPV-1SG-PRAGM⁸ /
I want water, I am thirsty”.

(25) tə-म्म-ाś ábbā ya-ʂəffār-a / 3SG.F-say.IPV.IO.3SG father.SG.M 3SG.M-travel.IPV-PRAGM /
(The girl) replied: “My father is away,

(26) əm̥ma ya-ʂəffār-a / brother.SG.M 3SG.M-travel.IPV-PRAGM /
my brother is away,

(27) lə-fatk-צ-əs⁹ albáb i ḥadd / NEG-open.AOR-1SG.IO.3SG door.SG.M to person.SG.M /
I will not open the door to anyone,

(28) [FS] lə-fatk-צ-əs i ḥidda / [FS] NEG-open.AOR-1SG.IO.3SG to person.SG.M /
I will not open (the door) to anyone!”

(29) ḥārama ʃəllá-m úš-i amán / shame on-2SG.F give.IPV.IO.1SG water.PL.M /
(The man said): “Shame on you! Give me water”.

(30) tə-म्म-ाś ábbā ə-₦ma-i-ya 3SG.F-say.IPV.IO.3SG father.SG.M 3SG.M-say.IPV.IO.1SG-PRAGM
She said: “My father told me

(31) lə-ʃəttx-əs i ḥadd / lə-taffāy NEG-open.IMP.IO.3SG to person.SG.M / NEG-go_out.IMP
‘do not open for anyone, do not go out

(32) i albáb xáɬes / ə-flá táni yom
to door.SG.M at_all / 3SG.M-leave.IPV second day.SG.M
the door at all”’. He left. The second day

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⁷ Demonstratives in Siwi have a very rare typological feature: the addressee agreement. If the addressee is a male, the suffix is -ək, if a female, the suffix is -əm, if there is more than one person -erən. A suffix -ə (-ya) is also possible, when the speaker does not share the information with the addressee or when the speaker refers to abstract referents (see Souag 2013: 138-151, 2014a, 2014b; Schiattarella 2017: 33-34).

⁸ The -ə suffix, here glossed PRAGM, can be attached to verbs, adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers and to the existential particle di ‘there is’ or ‘yur-“at”+pronouns’, indicating possession. Its function for all this categories is to mark pragmatic relevance for the speaker. See Schiattarella (forthcoming) for more details.

⁹ When a verb at 1SG is followed by an indirect object clitic, the personal clitic is -(a)ə instead of -(a)x.
33) y-usád yә-qәrab-as / tálat yom 3SG.M-come.PFV 3SG.M-knock.PFV-IO.3SG / third day.SG.M he came and knocked (at her door), the third day

34) yә-qәrab-as / lә-tә-ftәk albáb / 3SG.M-knock.PFV-IO.3SG / NEG-3SG.F-open.PFV door.SG.M / he knocked (at her door), she did not open the door.

35) al i-wәssa tәlti tәsarәft / until 3SG.M-ask.PFV woman.SG.F old.SG.F / Until (the passer-by) asked an old woman,

36) tәlti::: bint-hәrәm / t-usád woman.SG.F ill-repute / 3SG.F-come.PFV a woman of ill-repute, she came

37) t-qәrab-әs i tlәčә / 3SG.F-knock.PFV-IO.3SG to girl.SG.F / and knocked on the girl(‘s door).

38) [yәhdikи yәrdәki miәәrәf eh] hәntә / [May God lead you and fulfill you and so on] what /
“[In Arabic: (May God) lead you and fulfill you, and so on]. What?

39) fәtтk-i a bәnti / t-угәy open.IMP-IO.1SG VOC my_girl / 3SG.F-refuse.PFV Open up for me, girl”. She refused

40) gә-tә-ftәk albәb / aggәtәd IRR-3SG.F-open.AOR door.SG.M / man.SG.M to open the door. The man

41) l-yә-rәyyәh / al::: abbә-nn-әs xәәs NEG-3SG.M-rest.PFV / until father.SG.M-of-3SG stop was not satisfied. Until the father, well,

42) i-tәs-әnd sg әләqәgәg anni 3-come.IPFV-PL from pilgrimage.PL.M COMP they were coming back from the pilgrimage.

43) g-(y)-әs-әnd / yә-flәn tlәtәshәr / IRR-3-come.AOR-PL / 3-leave.PFV-PL three_months / Three months had passed,

44) na arbaәtәshәr / i-tәs-әnd or four_months / 3-come.IPFV-PL or (maybe) four, they were coming back

45) sg әләqәgәg // aggәtәd i-rәә from pilgrimage.PL.M // man.SG.M 3SG.M-go.PFV from the pilgrimage. The man (who knocked at the girl’s door)
(46) ya-ṃm-ās i abbá-nn-ās / ywa
3SG.M-say.PFV.IO.3SG to father.SG.M-of-3SG / DEM.SG.M
told her father: “There you go,

(47) tlačča-nn-āk tə-ffāy-a / tə-ṛṛḥ
girl.SG.F-of-2SG.M 3SG.F-go-out.PFV-PRAGM / 3SG.F-go.IPVF
your daughter has gone out. She went

(48) i ssuq tə-ṛṛḥ i itilən lá-di
to market.SG.M 3SG.F-go.IPVF to garden.PL.M NEG-EXIST
to the market, she went to the gardens,

(49) šra / lá-di ankán lá-tə-ṛṛḥ / thing.SG.M / NEG-EXIST place.SG.M NEG-3SG.F-go.IPVF / there is nothing, there is no place she did not go,

(50) yer / niš wəmbm-ə-k almanət ənni
but / IDP.1SG say.PFV-1SG-IO.2SG.M deposit.SG.F COMP
but I am (just) telling you (this) secret in order to

(51) ga-wəssl-áx-tət niš wəssl-áx-tət
IRR-transmit.AOR-1SG-DO.3SG.F IDP.1SG transmit.PFV-1SG-DO.3SG.F
transmit it. I transmitted it”.

(52) xlaš / abbá-nn-ās ya-ṃm-ās
stop / father.SG.M-of-3SG 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG
Well, the father said:

(53) tlāčča tat-ōk / aʃʃiy-ēt
girl.SG.F DEM.SG.F-2SG.M / take.IMP-DO.3SG.F
“This girl, take her.

(54) ga-yəṛṣ-š-əs10 / lá-x̱-ix aẓəṛrə-nn-əs
IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG / NEG-want.PFV-1SG see.VN-of-3SG
I will slaughter her. I don’t want to see her.

(55) x̱-ix ga-ktər-š-i idammən-ənn-əs /
want.PFV-1SG IRR-bring.AOR-2SG-IO.1SG blood.PL.M-of-3SG /
I want you to bring me her blood.

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10 The noun following ɣəṛṣ ‘to slaughter’ can be both a direct or indirect object. In the latter case, the indirect object pronoun is obligatory suffixed to the verb and the lexical indirect object is preceded by the preposition ɬ ‘to’. The choice between direct and indirect complements is often determined by semantic properties, like animacy and definiteness. Direct objects are favoured with non-human and/or non-identifiable nouns, while indirect objects are preferred with human and/or identifiable nouns. When the indirect pronoun is not co-referential to the noun that follows the verb (the object of slaughtering), the noun following the verb is a direct object (without ɬ), even if human and/or identifiable (see 141 and 210).
(56) ga-sw-āx-tən / lá-xs-ix azəṛṛ-nn-əs
IRR-drink.AOR-1SG-DO.3PL / NEG-want.PFV-1SG see.VN-of-3SG
I will drink it. I don’t want to see her”.

(57) bïdu / mämək ábbə ?
also / how father.SG.M ?
(His son said:) “How (is it possible), my father?”

(58) yə-ṃm-əs ga-ɣə-ɾəs-ʃ-as
3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG IRR-slaughter.AOR-2SG-IO.3SG or
(3SG.M) (The father) said: “You will slaughter her or

(59) ga-ɣə-ɾəs-ʃ-əwən i ɣmiʃə / yə-ṃm-əs
IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.2PL to everybody / 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG
I will slaughter you both”. (The brother) replied:

(60) xlaʃ ábbə / gə-ḥə-ax ga-ʃʃy-āx-tət /
stop father.SG.M / IRR-go.AOR-1SG IRR-take.AOR-1SG-DO.3SG.F /
“Alright, father, I will go, I will take her,

(61) ga-ɣə-ɾəs-ʃ-as / i-ɾaʃ yə-qəɾqəb
IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG / 3SG.M-go.PFV 3SG.M-knock.PFV
I will slaughter her”. (The brother) started knocking

(62) ɣəbb / battin? yə-ṃm-əs ən
in door.SG.M / who? 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG IDP.1SG
on the door. (Her sister asked:) “Who is (there)?”. He replied “I am

(63) ənəmə-m / gmənə ábbə ?
brother.SG.M-POSS.2SG.F / where father.SG.M ?
your brother.” (She replied): “Where is my father?”

(64) yə-ṃm-əs abbə-nəm mázal g əmʃarəb /
3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG father.SG.M-of-2SG.F still in road.PL.F /
He said: “Your father is still on the road,

(65) ʃəmməl i-təsəd / háyyə ɣə-(n)-ɾəh
PROG 3SG.M-come.IPVF / come on IRR-(1PL)-go.AOR
he is coming. Come on, let’s go

(66) ga-n-qəbl-a / tə-fək albaʃ
IRR-1PL-meet.AOR-DO.3SG.M / 3SG.F-open.PFV door.SG.M
and meet him”. She opened the door,

idammən ‘blood’, as well as most liquids, is plural in Siwi. That is why the direct object pronoun here is
tən (3PL): ga-sw-āx-ən, lit. ‘I will drink them’.
(67) t-uyá\[12\] aşı́bät i-gällas / 3SG.F-take.PFV brother.SG-M.POSS.3SG hug.VN 3SG.M-cry.IPFV / she hugged her brother, he cried.

(68) mának g-i-yấrš-as mə́y 3SG.F-slaughter.AOR-IO.3SG to How will he slaughter

(69) wóltsa-t ? yə-rfá-ya / sister.SG.F-POSS.3SG ? 3SG.M-be_scared.PFV-PRAGM / his sister? He was scared.

(70) yə-šṣy-ét g á́gmar / 3SG.M-take.PFV-DO.3SG.F in horse.SG.M / He took her on the horse,

(71) yə-fl-́án i ššáḥra / i-táffal-́an bá́id 3SG.M-leave.PFV-PL to desert.SG.M / 3-leave.IPFV-PL far they went to the desert, they went far,

(72) bá́id bá́id bá́id bá́id / yə-fff-́án af šál far far far far / 3-go_out.PFV-PL from country.SG.M far away, they went out of the town,

(73) xálš / al::: i-záwt-́en yə-μm-ás at_all / until 3-be_tired.PFV-PL 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG until (the time) they were tired and he told her:

(74) háyya gā-nrráyyah / mázál ábbá g má\[13\] ? come_on IRR-1PL-rest.AOR / still father.SG.M in where? “Come on, let’s rest”. (She said:) “Where is our father?”

(75) yə-μm-ás mázál bá́id yer gā-nrráyyah / 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG still far but IRR-1PL-rest.AOR / He replied: “(Our father is) still far away. Let’s rest”.

(76) yə-f-́án támyárt / yə-țtá-́n / yó-ššbar al::: 3-find.PFV-PL cave.SG.F / 3-sleep.PFV-PL / 3SG.M-wait.PFV until They found a cave, they laid down, he waited until

(77) t-náddum / yə-ššáy txúshá́t / 3SG.F-sleep.IPFV / 3SG.M-take.PFV knife.SG.F / she was sleeping. He took a knife.

\[12\] The verb ay ‘to take’ is here grammaticalized and used with the meaning of ‘to do the action of’. The verb ‘to give’ is also grammaticalized in this sense. See for example: y-uš-as ačču ‘he did the action of eating, he started to eat’, lit. ‘he gave him to eat’.

\[13\] The interrogative word mani ‘where’, sometimes preceded by a preposition (g ‘in’ mani, sg ‘from’, i ‘to’) can be reduced to ma, like in this passage (g ma instead of g mani) or to m alone ‘i m ətt-ət (to where go.PFV-2SG) ‘where are you going?’.
(78) ga-ɣə́ṛṣ-ɣ-as na IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG or (He thought:) “Should I slaughter her or

(79) la-ga-ɣə́ṛṣ-ɣ-as ? NEG-IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG not?

(80) mának ga-ɣə́ṛṣ-ɣ-as i wältma / how IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG to sister.SG.F / How will I slaughter my sister?”

(81) ššwaytén sbḥan_allah rāḥbi / after_a_while praise_be_to_Allah God.SG.M / After a while, praise be to Allah, God

(82) i-baṣṭ-ās tyaržāst / 3SG.M-send.PFV-IO.3SG rabbit.SG.F / sent him a rabbit.

(83) yə-ṭṭāf tyaržaṣt 3SG.M-catch.PFV rabbit.SG.F (The brother) caught the rabbit

(84) i-yə́ṛṣ-as / yə-ššāy ləwə́: / 3SG.M-slaughter.PFV-IO.3SG / 3SG.M-take.PFV bowl.SG.M / and slaughtered it, he took a bowl,

(85) yə-ʃa ləwə́: / yə-ččúr-a idammán 3SG.M-find.PFV bowl.SG.M / 3SG.M-fill.PFV-PRAGM blood.PL.M (well, actually) he found a bowl, he filled it with blood,

(86) ágd-as / yə-ṭṭəwah tyaržaṣt yə-nyá in-3SG / 3SG.M-throw_away.PFV rabbit.SG.F 3SG.M-mount.PFV (then) he threw away the rabbit, he mounted

(87) ágmar yə-ʃla / yə-hḥ-āṣ i horse.SG.M 3SG.M-leave.PFV / 3SG.M-go.PFV-IO.3SG to the horse and he left. He went to


(89) yə-ḥḥ-āṣ / ah yə́ṛṣ-ɣ-as / 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG yes slaughter.PFV-1SG-IO.3SG / (His son) replied: “Yes I slaughtered her.

(90) yw-i-ya idammán / DEM-PL-PRAGM blood.PL.M / This is (her) blood”.

12
(91) yə-şsy-én yə-sw-én //
3SG.M-take.PFV-DO.3PL 3SG.M-drink.PFV-DO.3PL //
(The father) took it and drank it.

(92) bášd-ma yə-sw-én / tláčča xlaš /
after-COMP 3SG.M-drink.PFV-DO.3PL / girl.SG.F stop /
After he drank... well, the girl

(93) t-náddum / yə-ğğá wáltma-s
3SG.F-sleep.IPVF / 3SG.M-leave.PFV sister.SG.F-POSS.3SG
was sleeping, (the brother) had left his sister

(94) tt-álla g támɣart yə-flá i ágban xlaš
3SG.F-exist in cave.SG.F 3SG.M-leave.PFV to house.SG.M stop
in the cave, he went home

(95) [FS] t-fáttaš / t-təbbáḥ
[FS] 3SG.F-look_for.IPVF / 3SG.F-call.IPVF
(The girl started) searching, she called out,

(96) [FS] tə-ddir-a
3SG.M-leave.PFV-DO.3SG.F 3SG.F-live.PFV-PRAGM /
left her alive.

(97) lá-dí ḥídaa i-təmm-ás / [FS]
NEG-EXIST person.SG.M 3SG.M-say.IPVF-IO.3SG /
there was no one,

(98) imán-n-əs tt-álla g ššáḥra /
REFL-of-3SG 3SG.F-exist in desert.SG.M /
she was alone in the desert,

(99) yer g támɣart / t-ifá
but in cave.SG.F / 3SG.F-find.PFV
but in the cave. She found

(100) tyarzást tə-ɣris-a tə-ʃʃúz /
rabbit.SG.3F 3SG.F-slaughter.PFV-PRAGM 3SG.F-be_hungry.PFV /
a slaughtered rabbit, she was hungry,

(101) tə-ʃʃáy aksúm tə-bdú aččú ágd-əs /
3SG.F-take.PFV meat.SG.M 3SG.F-start.PFV eat.VN in-3SG /
she took the meat, she started to eat it,

(102) kálma_klámétən ga-tə-čč ḥábbə ágd-əs /
word_two_words IRR-3SG.F-eat.AOR a_bit in-3SG /
every once in a while, she would eat a bit of it.
She was thirsty, she wanted water. She kept searching,
some water. She started digging in the ground. She started drinking
she started digging in the land. She started drinking water.

Until (the moment) there was an emir, the son of the king,

he took her, he went to his father's

and married her.

She gave birth to seven boys.

There was a person, a priest, whatchacallit, a Christian,

he just wanted to grab the wife of the king's emir.

wihin (SG.M/PL); tihin (SG.F) is a placeholder word used when the speaker has temporarily forgotten what to say. The speaker was about to say alkahin 'priest' rather than 'Christian'.

14
When an imperative is followed by an indirect object, the plural -wər is replaced by -m- (Souag 2013: 195-196).

15 The interrogative word for ‘what’ tanta, can be reduced to ta: ta təşmar ‘what does she do?’ or t alone, if followed by a word starting with a vowel, like in this example.

16 When an imperative is followed by an indirect object, the plural -wər is replaced by -m- (Souag 2013: 195-196).
(127) ga-bb-á-nknun\(^{17}\) gá-zr-əm xali-twən
IRR-take.AOR-1SG.DO.2PL IRR-see.AOR-2PL uncle.SG.M-POSS.2PL
I will take you and you will see your uncle.

(128) ga-sdul-á-nknun / anni g-yá-qqad
IRR-let.come_back.AOR-1SG.DO.2PL / COMP IRR-3SG.M-take.AOR
and (then) I will let you come back” (so that he could take

(129) əmm-əs d tərwa:wən /
mother.SG.F-POSS.3SG and child.PL.F //
the mother and (her) children.

(130) y-usád ḡəddi-s / háyya awlād
3-come.PFV grandfather.SG.M-POSS.3SG / come_on boy.PL.M
The grandfather came (and asked:) “Come on, boys,

(131) ga-táhr-am u xlaš yomən tlāta
IRR-circumcise.AOR-2PL or stop two_days three
you will be circumcised, two, three days more days

(132) ga-n-tahr-áwən / hánta xə-əm ?
IRR-1PL-circumcise.AOR-IO.2PL / what want.PFV-2PL ?
and we will circumcise you. What do you want?”

(133) yə-xmá-n-as ənšnì nə-xsá azərərā
3-say.PFV-PL-IO.3SG IDP.1PL 1PL-want.PFV see.VN
(The children) told him: “We just want to meet

(134) xwalí-tanax / yə-xmám-əsən xlaš / yəlla /
uncle.SG.M-POSS.1PL / 3-say.PFV-IO.3PL stop / come_on /
our uncle”. He said: “Alright, let’s go!”

(135) yə-ktr-ən amsi:hhi / yə-qqád-ən-t
3-bring.PFV-PL Christian.SG.M / 3-take.PFV-PL-DO.3SG.M /
They (the emir and the king) brought the Christian, they took him,

(136) yə-qqád-ən táliti / yə-fl-ən
3-take.PFV-PL woman.SG.F / 3-leave.PFV-PL /
they took the woman and they left.

(137) yə-shəффēr-ən yə-ḥh-ən anni g-yá-zr-ən
3-travel.PFV-PL 3-go.PFV-PL COMP IRR-3-see.AOR-PL
They traveled, in order to see

(138) xwalí-tsan / šswaytēn
uncle.SG.M-POSS.3PL / after_a_while
their uncle. After a while,

---

\(^{17}\) When the verb is 1SG and has the 2SG.M/F or 2PL direct object, the suffix is just ə (instead of -(a)x and the direct object clitic does not follow the usual paradigm, but the independent pronouns are used instead (in this case ənknum ‘you (all)’).
(139) i-máraq-ən g ankán
3-reach.PFV-PL in place.SG.M
they reached a place.

(140) ya-mm-ás ah / ga-ttáwaš-t-i
3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG yes / IRR-obey.AOR-2SG-IO.1SG
(The Christian) said: “Will you obey me

(141) na ga-yáṛṣ-ʃ-am ággən n ḡir ?
or IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.2SG.F one.M of son.SG.M ?
or will I slaughter one of the children?

(142) tā-bū aglās / ya-mm-ás lā-gəllas /
3SG.M-start.PFV cry.VN / 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG NEG-cry.IMP /
(The woman) started to cry. (The Christian) said: “Don’t cry,

(143) na ga-yáṛṣ-ʃ-as i ḡir na or IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.3SG to child.SG.M or either I will slaughter one child or

(144) ga-ttáwaš-t-i / ya-mm-ás
IRR-obey.AOR-2SG-IO.1SG / 3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG
you will obey me”. He said:

(145) yáṛṣ-as / kull yom i-yáṭṭəš
slaughter.IMP-IO.3SG / every day.SG.M 3SG.M-slaughter.IPVF
“Slaughter him”. Every day he slaughtered

(146) hánta ? [laugh] ḡir / al ya-qqʷá-n / what ? [laugh] son.SG.M / until 3-finish.PFV-PL / what? (One of the) son(s). Until there were no more.

(147) ya-mm-ás xlaš g axf-śn-əm\(^\text{18}\) / na
3SG.M-say.PFV-IO.3SG stop in head.SG.M-of-2SG.F / or
(The Christian) told her: “Now it’s your turn.

(148) ga-ttáwaš-t-i na ga-yáṛṣ-ʃ-am ?
IRR-obey.AOR-2SG-IO.1SG or IRR-slaughter.AOR-1SG-IO.2SG.F ?
Will you obey me or will I slaughter you?”

(149) tō-mm-ās ḍiṣšbar g-a-ʃbb-ax /
3SG.F-say.PFV-IO.3SG wait.IMP IRR-wash.AOR-1SG /
She said: “Wait, I will do the ablutions,

(150) ga-zált-ax baṣd ams-ŏk yáṛṣ-i /
IRR-pray.AOR-1SG after this-2SG.M slaughter.IMP-IO.1SG /
I will pray and then, slaughter me!”

\(^{18}\) *axf* is the word for ‘head’, but when followed by the possessive pronoun, it can also be translated with ‘turn’: *axf-ənn-aw* ‘my turn’, *axf-ənn-ək* ‘your turn (M), etc.’.
(151) t-rah / t-ššáy / at-tángrat / t-yrás
3SG.F-go.PFV / 3SG.F-take.PFV / pot.SG.F / 3SG.F-slaughter.PFV
She took the pot, she slaughtered

(152) tyazät / t-hāṭtas / hābbata n áman
chicken.SG.F / 3SG.F-put.PFV-IO.3SG a bit of water.PL.M
a chicken, she put a bit of water,

(153) t-ág-ét / t-bēršak / t-llûm
3SG.F-leave.PFV-DO.3SG.F / 3SG.F-immense.PFV / 3SG.F-gather.PFV
she left it, she immerse (it). She gathered

(154) alḥal-an-nas / t-rwāl / at-tázzal
stuff.SG.M-of-3SG / 3SG.F-flee.PFV / 3SG.F-run.IPFV
her stuff, she ran away,

(155) at-tázzal / at-tázzal / amsihhi
3SG.F-run.IPFV / 3SG.F-run.IPFV / Christian.SG.M
far, far away. The Christian

(156) l-i-tbāh-a / yā-ḡil-a
NEG-3SG.M-sleep.PFV-PRAGM / 3SG.M-think.PFV-PRAGM
did not pay attention, he thought that she

(157) antátat / t-ṣbbu
IDP.3SG.F / 3SG.F-wash.IPFV
was doing the ablutions,

(158) antátat t-yris-a
IDP.3SG.F / 3SG.F-slaughter.PFV-PRAGM
but she had slaughtered

(159) tyazät / t-haṭ-it-a / g bota ?
chicken.SG.F / 3SG.F-put.PFV-DO.3SG.F-PRAGM / in what ?
the chicken and put it where?

(160) g at-tángrat / almuhummm tā-bdu at-tākāl
in pot.SG.F / important.SG.M / 3SG.F-start.PFV / 3SG.F-walk.IPFV
In the pot. Most importantly, she started to walk

(161) at-tākāl / t-kim i šal xlaf
3SG.F-walk.IPFV / 3SG.F-enter.PFV to country.SG.M different.SG.M
a lot, she entered another town,

(162) t-fāy-a / t-rwāl / af amsihhi
3SG.F-go_out.PFV-PRAGM / 3SG.M-flee.PFV on Christian.SG.M
she had gone out, she had run away from the Christian,

(163) xaṭṣ / at_all / a lot.
he could not see. He liked her, in order to listen to her. This woman, People from far away started to come. She started (doing) and what did she start (doing)? She stayed with her herself. She started to eat, drink, she became old. She learned how to recite the Quran and men’s clothes, she made a turban, after a while she found an old man who was reading, She started to eat, drink, she became old. The old man died, She learned how to recite the Quran. The old man was blind, she made a turban, she sat close to him, she wore a man. The old man was blind, she sat close to him, she wore a man. The old man was blind,
(177) tät-ok / antätät tát-šmär-a
DEM.SG.F-2SG.M / IDP.3SG.F 3SG.F-do.PFV-PRAGM
(well) she became

(178) imán-n-øs aggʷid / āllāhla n
REFL-of-3SG man.SG.M / beauty.SG.M of
herself (like) a man, (for) the beauty of

(179) sawt-ān-øs i-tás-and / s øgdá
voice.SG.M-of-3SG 3-come.IPVF-PL / from here
her voice, they came from here,

(180) s øgdá / ság šaliwán xlaf /
from here / from country.PL.M different.SG.M /
they came from there, they came from different countries.

(181) al::: øggán n ãnhår tâ-zrà bättin
until one.M of day.SG.M 3SG.F-see.PFV who
Until one day, who did she see,


(183) d::: abbâ-nn-øs n târwáwen / d::: əlmâlək /
and father.SG.M-of-3SG and child.PL.F / and king.SG.M /
(the father of the children), the king,

(184) əllì howa ǧiddi-s n târwáwen / REF IDP.3SG.M granfather.SG.M-POSS.3SG of child.PL.F / the one who was the gradfather of the children,

(185) d amsîhhi / d::: abbâ-nn-øs /
and Christian.SG.M / and father.SG.M-of-3SG / the Christian, her father,

(186) d ámמה-s / tâlti tlâšgust /
and brother.SG.M-POSS.3SG / woman.SG.F old.SG.F / her brother, the old woman,

(187) d [FS] tâlti tlâšgust wən tə-qârəb-əs / and [FS] woman.SG.F old.SG.F REL 3SG.F-knock.PFV-IO.3SG / the old woman who knocked (at her door)

(188) d aggʷid wən ya-qârəb-əs nnûba
and man.SG.M REL 3SG.M-knock.PFV-IO.3SG all
and the man who knocked (at her door), everybody

(189) i-lâyəm-in-a / g ammâs n itâdâm /
3-meet.PFV-PL-PRAGM / in middle of people.PL.M /
met among other people.
"Ok, I will tell you, it happened. Stop you start first." She said:

When she stopped reading, she said:

"Come on, let’s tell (a story). Each one (of you)"

They told her: “Come on,

“Ok, I will tell you, it happened

"There was a woman and"
(203) i-sár  i-sár / ššwaytén / 3SG.M-happen.PFV 3SG.M-happen.PFV / after_a_while / 
After a while,

(204) tálti  tlāqāq  d ágg“id / šak19  akāddāb 
woman.SG.F old.SG.F and man.SG.M / IDP.2SG.M liar.SG.M 
the old woman and the man (told her): “You are a liar,

(205) sāg  má  ssn-āt  žlan  daw-i-ya / from where know.PFV-2SG speech.PL.M DEM-PL-PRAGM / from where do you know this story?”

(206) šāṭṭ  t-išāršāḥ  akbār-ānn-ūs  tā-nm-ās 
šāṭṭ  3SG.M-tear_off.PFV cloth.SG.M-of-3SG 3SG.F-say.PFV-IO.3SG 
She tore off her clothes, she said:

(207) niš  bidu  nātta / tā-bfād 
IDP.1SG also IDP.3SG.M / 3SG.F-tear.PFV 
“It’s me, indeed (behind this man).” She tore off

(208) alfāf-ānn-ūs / tā-ffāq  tálti / turban.SG.M-of-3SG / 3SG.F-go_out.PFV woman.SG.F / her turban, the woman came out.

(209) n  wānn:  yā-qqāq-ū-n-ās-a / amsīḥī 
of REL 3-knock.PFV-PL-IO.3SG-PRAGM / Christian.SG.M 
Those who knocked (at her door) and the Christian

(210) i-yārš-ās-ū / tarwāwen-ānn-ūs / 3SG.M-slaughter.PFV-IO.3SG-PRAGM child.PL.F-of-3SG / who had slaughtered her children,

(211) yā-ṭṭf-ā-n-ūn / aṣābbān / 3-apprehend.PFV-PL-DO.3PL / rich.SG.M / they apprehended them. (To) the rich,

(212) i-ḥaṭṭ-n-ūs  sān  n  tihāzma  n  ʂyārən 
3-put.PFV-PL-IO.3SG two of bundle.PL.F of wood.PL.M 
they put two bundles of wood

(213) yā-ḥārğ-ā-n-t / afqāri / i-ḥaṭṭ-n-ūs 
3-burn.PFV-PL-DO.3SG.M / poor.SG.M / 3-put.PFV-PL-IO.3SG 
and they burned him. (To) the poor, they put

(214) ẓaggāt  n  thāẓmat  n  ʂyārən  yā-ḥārğ-ān-t / one.F of bundle.SG.F of wood.PL.M 3-burn.PFV-PL-DO.3SG.M / one bundle of wood and they burned him.

---

19 The 2SG.M form of the independent pronoun is used here because people think the protagonist is a man, as she is wearing men’s clothes.
(215) ta-dwál yən aggʷid-án-n-əs / t-šábat
3SG.F-come_back.PFV to man.SG.M-of-3SG / 3SG.F-hug.PFV
(The woman) came back to her husband, she hugged

(216) abbá-nn-əs / yó-sama-ən
father.SG.M-of-3SG / 3SG.M-live.PFV-PL
her father, they lived

(217) [fi aman w tabat aw nabat / xallifu šubyan u banat]
[Ending formula in Arabic: in peace and security, they gave birth to boys and girls].

3. Conclusions

<17> The list of features in the first part of this paper has shown how Siwi folktales fit with the broader characteristics that have been found to be typical in North African folktales, showing that this kind of oral production is constantly influenced and transmitted between different peoples who may even live far away from each other. Nevertheless, the folktale presented above also enriches our knowledge of Siwi literary tradition because it contains elements not found in the Siwi texts collected until now, such as the presence of different religious people who are sometimes connoted positively, and other times negatively.

<18> Moreover, the presence of Arabic riddles and ending formulas confirms how this kind of oral production influences and in turn is being influenced by surrounding communities. It is ausplicable that in the near future we will have more data on the oral literary production of the non-Siwi communities living in the oasis (such as Bedouins living in the peripheral areas of the oasis). This would allow us to understand whether this influence is limited to specific/functional parts of the folktale only, or whether it is taking place on a larger scale. The paper aims at making a small contribution to filling this gap in an area which still requires a lot of investigation.

List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOR</th>
<th>aorist</th>
<th>POSS</th>
<th>possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
<td>PRAGM</td>
<td>pragmatic relevance marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>direct object</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXIST</td>
<td>existential</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>REL</td>
<td>relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>false start</td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>independent pronoun</td>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>vocative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>VN</td>
<td>verbal noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>indirect object</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>first person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPFV</td>
<td>imperfective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>end of a minor prosodic unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>end of a major prosodic unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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