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THE ARGAN TREE AND ITS TASHELHIYT BERBER LEXICON

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This contribution² is of ethnographic and lexicographic nature, it is divided into two sections. In the first I will present a short and general description of the argan tree of South Morocco and the production of the well-known argan oil. In the second section I will present five ethnographic texts in Tashelhiyt Berber and their translations, all of them documents dealing with this tree in an interesting variety of phrasings and special terminology.

1. THE ARGAN TREE

The argan tree is of great economic importance for the inhabitants of rural South Morocco, because they make argan oil out of its fruits. It is known in Latin as *Argania spinosa* (L.) or as *Argania sideroxylon* Roem & Schult., and belongs to the family of the *Sapotaceae*. The word *argan* is Tashelhiyt Berber, it contains the root consonants *RG*, that can be found in a number of lexical items, all linked to the argan oil production³. This tree is indigenous in South

1. I thank Mr. John Cooper (Norwich, United Kingdom) for his kindness to correct the English text.

2. This contribution is an elaborated version of my article “The argan tree of South Morocco, an ethnographic note”, in : Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan P. Hoogendijk, *O ye Gentlemen : Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in honour of Remke Kruk*, Brill 2007, p. 171-181.

3. Examples are : *rg* “to break the argan nut” ; *amrrag* “someone who breaks the argan nut with the help of a stone ; the stone with which one breaks the argan nut” ; *awrag* “the action of breaking the argan nut ; the stone with which one breaks the argan nut” ; *irg*, plural *irgn* “pieces of the broken shell of the argan nut” ; *tamrragt*, plural *timrragin* “woman who breaks the argan nut with the help of a stone”, *targant* “a small argan tree”.

Morocco⁴ and considered a botanic relic⁵. Its distribution is limited to an approximately 150 kilometres wide strip of coastal hinterland between the towns of Safi and Sidi Ifni.

Inhabitants of South Morocco appreciate the argan tree and argan oil to such an extent that they see it as an emblem of their regional cultural heritage. Argan trees and argan oil are to South Morocco what the maple and maple syrup are to Canada. Its special qualities and its importance for the local population were reasons for the UNESCO to include the argan tree, in 1999, in its World Heritage List.

One usually sees the argan trees scattered quite haphazardly in the South Moroccan landscape. They are not planted in gardens in the way people do with olives. In many cases they stand isolated rather than in groups. They can grow at altitudes up to 1700 metres. The roots of the argan tree are known to be capable of reaching water at great depths.

The argan tree usually has a short, twisted stem. Its crown can be quite big, five to six metres high and may even display a certain grandeur. Its prickly branches grow thickly together. The bark has the texture of the skin of a snake. When pruned, mutilated or even cut back to the minimum, the argan comes back vigorously with an abundance of shoots.

The argan tree blossoms in late spring, showing white, soft green or soft yellow flowers with five petals. The dark green shiny, long-oval leaves, standing on very short stalks and placed alternately on the two sides of a branch, persist throughout the year. Challot has observed that the argan tree may lose its leaves in times of great drought and he explains it as an appropriate reaction of the tree to prevent over-evaporation.⁶

The fruit of the argan tree looks like a big green olive in the shape of a Brazil nut or in the shape of a date. It stands on such a small stalk as if it grows from the branch itself. The outside layer of the fruit is pulpy like the olive. When this layer is removed one sees, what I will call here, the argan “nut” with its hard shell. Inside this “nut” one finds often one, sometimes two almond-like argan kernels that contain the highly appreciated argan oil.

Some weeks before the harvest of ripe argan fruits, the argan tree area is declared an *agdal*⁷, which means that it is closed to people and animals, in

4. According to Challot 1949 the argan has been successfully introduced in the South of France in the vicinity of the cities of Bandol and Toulon. In recent years attempts have been made to introduce the argan in the Moroccan Rif. In Chouihia, in the Berkane region, two thousand argan trees have been planted in 2003.

5. G. Camps in *Encyclopédie Berbère*, vol 6, p. 879 (sub A 267 *Arganier*) “un élément d’une flore relique, témoin d’une ancienne extension de la végétation tropicale au sud-ouest du Maghreb”.

6. (Challot 1949: 1) “Toutefois, lorsque l’arbre se trouve avoir à faire face à des conditions de sécheresse accentuée, il a un réflexe de défense contre l’évaporation et se défeuille entièrement.”

7. The word *Agdal* is frequently found in Moroccan toponymy, the best-known case being Rabat Agdal, a former extramural agricultural area, now a modern residential quarter of the city.

order to avoid damage to the developing argan fruits⁸ and to prevent theft. In former times it was one of the tasks of the village council (*ljmaet*) to decide when to *agdal*-ize the argan grounds and when to annul this measure.

Children, men and women are involved in the harvest of the argan fruits. It is mainly the fallen argan fruits that are carefully collected. The actual production of argan oil is a job for women only and is known to be very labour-intensive. They first have to peel off the dried pulpy outside layer of the fruit. Then they have to break the shell of the “nut”, which they usually do with a stone, in order to reach the argan kernels. During this breaking operation women work together in groups⁹. And finally they have to squeeze out, with their hands, the argan oil from the ground argan kernel paste. The labor-intensive character of the argan oil production is demonstrated by data given by Challot. According to him one needs at least three kilograms of argan kernels to produce one litre of argan oil. For three kilograms of argan kernels one has to collect one hundred kilograms of argan fruits.¹⁰

The Laoust text, given in section 2.1 below, states that also argan nuts from argan fruits eaten and digested by goats and subsequently excreted, are collected by people. These argan nuts are treated separately in the argan production process, but are also highly appreciated because of their special flavour.

Argan oil, with its soft and nutty taste, is used first of all in the kitchen as a cooking and salad oil. Moreover it plays an important role in the traditional health care of the region, in particular in the treatment of various dermatological diseases.¹¹ As it is rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, argan oil is considered good for the human heart and vascular system.

Some of the traditional uses of argan oil no longer exist. Argan oil used to be one of the ingredients in traditional soap making and it was used as fuel in oil lamps.

None of the by-products of argan oil production are wasted : the pulp debris (*alig*), left after removing the outside layer of the argan fruit, is excellent fodder for cattle ; the broken nutshells (*irgn*) are used as fuel in the kitchen, and the debris cakes, left after pressing the argan oil out of the argan kernels, is a high protein cattle concentrate (*tazgmmut*)¹².

8. The leaves of the argan tree are sought-after by goats. Everywhere in Morocco one can buy postcards showing goats grazing argan leaves while standing amazingly high on this tree.

9. Argan tree owners who don't have enough women at their disposal to help them, may ask for help from neighbouring women (*tiwizi* “the social institution of helping out one's neighbour”) or they may hire them.

10. Usually the argan fruits are dried before taking out the “nut” ; the dried argan fruits weigh half of their weight when harvested.

11. An article about the traditional role of argan oil for medical purposes as described in the Tashelhiyt Berber manuscripts written in Arabic characters is in preparation.

12. Pulp (*alig*) and cakes (*tazgmmut*) are sometimes offered for sale at local markets.

Another well-known product from the Moroccan South that cannot be made without argan oil is *amlu*, which looks like fluid peanut butter. It is the name for both the paste of ground roasted argan kernels, *and* the mixture of this paste with honey and argan oil¹³. For Tashelhiyt Berbers the latter is a traditional treat for travellers and convalescing sick people. It is eaten by simply dipping one's bread into it.

Most of the argan oil is consumed locally, relatively small quantities are sold to outsiders. Sellers of argan oil can be seen at the sides of the national roads in the Western High Atlas, e.g. alongside the road from Marrakech to Agadir. They ask high prices for their argan oil, often using two correct sales arguments: the labour-intensivity of the product, and the mentioned positive medical effects.

People in South Morocco report that local religious scholars disagree whether argan oil should be submitted to the same kind of religious tax (*zakât*) as olive oil. Many of them declare it exempt from any tax because its production is so labour-intensive. According to a translated *tertib* document published by G. Salmon in 1904, specifying tax rates of various agricultural products¹⁴, the owner of an argan tree had to pay two and half *douro* (an old coinage) per tree.

2. TASHELHIYT BERBER TEXTS ON THE ARGAN TREE AND THE PRODUCTION OF ITS OIL

The first text (see section 2.1) is taken from one of the publications of Émile Laoust, one of the best French specialists in the anthropology of the Berber populations of North Africa. In his *Cours de berbère marocain, dialectes du Sous, du Haut et de l'Anti-atlas*, (Challamel) Paris, 1^{re} édition 1921, page 264-266, he gives an interesting Tashelhiyt Berber text about the argan tree. Though his transcription of Tashelhiyt Berber is far from flawless¹⁵, the text can easily be understood. This text has had no published translation sofar, the translation given below is mine.

His text is from the Ihahan, a Tashelhiyt Berber-speaking tribe south of Essaouira and treats the following subjects: the distribution of the argan tree; the development of the argan fruit and nomenclature for the various stages; measures to regulate the harvest; the harvest itself; pressing the argan oil, the product and the by-products; helping one's neighbour with the production of argan oil.

13. One comes close to the taste of this *amlu* mixture, if one mixes peanut butter of excellent quality with pure honey.

14. Salmon 1904: 155.

15. Laoust is, for instance, inconsistent in the writing of long (double) consonants and in the writing of velarized (or "emphatic") consonants. Moreover he uses *r* for *ɣ*, which blocks the use of this sign for an emphatic *r*.

The second text (see section 2.2) is taken from Arsène Roux, *La vie berbère par les textes*, Paris 1955, page 34; it is a part of Roux's text 13 called *Lidam* ("Edible fat"). Roux (1893-1971) was a great specialist in the Berber language of the Middle Atlas and in Tashelhiyt Berber. His deep knowledge of Middle Atlas Berber and Tashelhiyt Berber is evident from the personal library and papers that he left behind after his death. Unfortunately he did not publish much. *La vie berbère par les textes*, an important collection of ethnographic texts in an excellent phonetic transcription, was his only book. He did not publish the translation volume that he promised in the *Avertissement* to this book.¹⁶ The translation of this text is mine. After this text Roux presents a long list of lexical notes¹⁷ which I decided to quote in full (see section 2.2.1).

The text is from the Ashtuken, a Tashelhiyt Berber-speaking tribe south east of Agadir. One may note some dialect differences in the argan terminology when one compares the texts below with the Ihahan text of Laoust.

The third text (see section 2.3) is the short text on page 62, also from Arsène Roux, *La vie berbère par les textes*, Paris 1955. The translation of this text is mine. It is written in the Tashelhiyt Berber dialect of the Laxşaş tribe near Tiznit, a town 100 kilometres south of Agadir.

The fourth text (see section 2.4) is also taken from Arsène Roux's, *La vie berbère par les textes*, Paris 1955. It is a part of text 64 called *Middn udrar d wi uzayar* "People of the mountains and of the plain" (p. 103-106), written in the Ayt Brayyim dialect. The part given here is on page 105 from line 7 to line 22.

The fifth text (see section 2.5) is a small unpublished text from the Fonds Roux¹⁸, a page in the handwriting of Roux. It is in the Ashtuken dialect and given by Roux's main informant, the well-known traditional scholar Si Brahim al-Kunki in a notebook of 1948-1949. This small text, describing succinctly the blessing of the argan, may serve as a conclusion.

Note that all texts are retranscribed in a morphophonological transcription similar to the one used in my other publications on Tashelhiyt Berber.

2.1. Laoust 1921 : 264-266 (Ihahan dialect)

Illa wargan γ Iḥaḥan, illa γ tmazirt n Šyadma, illa γ tmazirt n Sus. Ur a ittizzaw wargan sad lli ittmayay γ tmazirt lli γ illa. Iγ d imyi ar ittga tag^wntaft¹⁹; iy idda ar da ittaru ar ittga targant. Ifrawn nns zund wi n rḥman, akššud nns iga

16. Cf. Roux 1955, p. 5.

17. Cf. Roux 1955: 34-36.

18. See Stroomer and Peyron 2003 : 34 : 30.1.1.

19. Rejeton; jeune pousse d'arganier. (Laoust)

zund wi n lmšmaš ; ilin gis isnnann, ar ittgga ssjrt idrkn ; ar tdrak γ illa wakal ifulkin ittilin amazir ; γ illi ur illi wakal ar ittmz̄zi ; ar ittili γ imudal ; ar gis ittim̄yur ar gis ittmz̄zi, ur kulli igi yan.

Γ k̄ubr̄ a γ illa lxf γ wargan, γ nuwambir ar iskar ajddig nns. Ajddig nns ar ittgga zund wi n zzit, ar ittimlul. Iy idda ar d iluḥ ajddig ar iskar kra n uḥ̄ub, ar as nttini : “Ibiyyn wargan aḥ̄ub nns.” Iy idda ar d ibiyyn aḥ̄ub nns ar ittkka lqadara n yan wayyur ar iskar ag^wmmu²⁰. Iy idda ar d igummi ar ittgga bl̄ziz²¹. Abl̄ziz ar ittgga zund lmšmaš ; iy idda ar d inu, ar ittgga zund tiyni, ar as nttini afiyyaš²².

Iy idda ar d ig afiyyaš ar ittar s ddu ssjrt nns, ar ittili lbriḥ γ tmazirt, ar ttinin : “Hann argan idr, hann illa ugdaḥ ; lbahim, ad ur ftunt s tagant ula izgarn, ula ulli, ula ireman, illa ugdaḥ. Iy nn nufa lbahim n kra γ tagant, hann wa lli imqur̄n γ tg^wdzit n kra ha ittayras !”

Lqaeida n ugdaḥ, ar as ttbr̄m̄nt tikr̄kurin baš ad ssnn mddn is illa ugdaḥ. Ass nna ira ir̄zm ugdaḥ, ar ittili lbriḥ, ar ttinin : “Hann ag^wdaḥ ir̄zm !”

Ar fitunt tm̄yar̄in ula lḥ̄sum ula irgazn, ar grrun afiyyaš ; ar t id ttḡgan γ taryilin, γ a ttgrrun ar t id ttasin ar yan lmude iedln, ffin t gis, skrn gis agudi ; ar ass nna kullu t g^wran, ar ttḡgan ifrig n ugudi ad ur lkm̄nt lbahim. Wan dar ur illi wargan, ar igrru γ aylli nn iqaman γ ssjrt n̄y γ ddu ssjrt.

Targant nna illan γ usulil ur stt tḥ̄kam̄n mddn a stt grun, ar srs aqqlaynt lbahim ar stt grrunt ; iy ddant lbahim ar d ulsunt γ tuz̄zumt n uzal ar sgluliynt uḥ̄lim lli illan γ udis nnsnt. Uḥ̄lim ann lli sgluliynt ar t smunan, ar t id ttezaln waḥ̄dut, aḥ̄ku illa gis wargan ifulkin, yuf walli yaḥ̄ni ṣ̄fiyyaš̄n mddn, ar gis ttili tuj̄jut iedln iqwa bahra ; γikann a f a t id ttezaln.

Ar d ttawin mddn lbahim s dar ugudi n ufiyyaš̄ lli illan γ tagant, ar t id ttemmarn γ iṣ̄wariyn, asin t f iggi lbahim, ar t id ttawin s tgm̄mi, ar t inn gis srusn. Ass nna km̄mln s usatti, ar t ṣ̄fiȳšn s uḥ̄ru, ezln gis alig s yat tsga, uḥ̄lim s yat tsga. Alig ar t sttan izgarn ula ireman ; uḥ̄lim ar t ttragn s uḥ̄ru. Iy idda ar t rgin, ar grrun t̄zn̄in nns γ tuz̄zumt n yirgn²³ ; irgn ar tn ttḡgan i lēfiyt ; t̄zn̄in n

20. Fruit vert de l'arganier. (Laoust)

21. Fruit mûr. (Laoust)

22. Fruit mûr qui tombe. (Laoust)

23. Noyau cassé. (Laoust)

wargan ar tnt slaynt γ unxdam illa γ iggi lefiyt. Iy dda ar t slint, ar tnt tffint γ tsgg^wit, asin tnt s uzrg n tznin, zđin tnt, iziđ nns iga zund askkif, ar as nttini amlu²⁴ n tznin n wargan (ašku illa umlu n tznin n lluz); amlu ar nn ittfi γ tqşriyt n izmi. Iy t zmmant s ifassn nnsnt ar as ttggnt imikik n waman; luwl nns ar ittgga zund ti^wxsas; iy d idda ar d imun, ar ittgga zund lejın.

Hatinn akud ann a izma. Ar ttasint tazgmmut, ar gis skarnt γ unška n twullit, zmnnt, srsnt, asin d argan ar t id ttggant γ kra n txsagt n wargan. Tazgmmut ar stt akkan i ireman n γ izgarn γ luqt n tyuyuga; ireman ar stt sttan γ llyali ašku tlla gis nnfiēt.

Tiwizi n ufiyyaš. Iy ra ttgrun mddn, wa lli dar iggut ufiyyaš ar ittellam s twizi n ufiyyaš ar ittili ugri nns. Iy idda ar d ili ugri nns, ar gis ttilint lquwt n tm γ arin d lhşum; ifrđ srsnt bab n wargan; iy ddant ar d ulsunt, ar asnt yakka amttšu iggutn. Ass nna kmmlnt ar tnt ittelam, ar asnt ittini: “Hann i Rbbi llant dari tmrragin!” Iy llant tmrragin ar gis ttilint tm γ arin ggutn; iy ddant ar d aškint s tigmmi, ar ittili lfrđ d tyurit; ar ttin mddn: “Ma illan dar flan γ assa?” “Llant dars tmrragin n uzlim.” Kra gisnt ar irrag, kra ar istay tiznin z γ yirgn, kra gisnt ar islay tiznin γ unxdam; iy ddant ar tnt slint ar tnt tffint γ tsgg^wit; yat yađni gisnt ar tnt tzzad γ uzrg n tznin; ar nn tsmday taqşriyt yizmi i imi n uzrg n tznin ar d gis iđtar umlu, ar tzzad; yat yađni ar tzmma; iy tzmma ar tskar lfsis z γ wargan lli zwarn i tmrragin; ikann a igan lqaeida n tmrragin. (Iħaħan)

Translation :

There are argan trees in the Ihahan region, in the Chiadma²⁵ region as well as in the Sous valley. Argan is not planted, it simply grows in the area where it occurs. When it grows, it is a small argan shoot (*tag^wntaft*²⁶). When it has started to produce, it is a small argan tree (*targant*²⁷). Its leaves are like those of the pomegranate tree, its wood is like the wood of the apricot tree. It has thorns. It is a big tree, it grows well in good, well-manured soil. Where the ground is

24. Mouture d'amandes grillées, forme comme une pâte molle. (Laoust)

25. The *Chiadma* is an arabophone tribe north of Essaouira.

26. Note that *tagwntaft* and the masculine equivalent *agwntaf* also indicate a woman and a man from the well-known Tashelhiyt Berber-speaking Goundafa tribe of the High Atlas. The Goundafa, Glaoua and Mtougga tribes dominated South Moroccan politics of the pre-protectorate and early protectorate period (1850-1930).

27. I.e. the word argan with the feminine circumfix *t- -t* to denote the diminutive.

not (suitable), it remains small. It is found on mountain slopes, where they can be big or small, they are not of the same size everywhere.

In October²⁸ there are shoots on the argan, in November it makes flowers. Their flowers are like those of the olive tree, they are white. When it has thrown off its flowers, it makes buds (*aḥbub*). We then say: “The argan shows its buds” (*ibiyyn wargan aḥbub nns*). Approximately one month after “showing its buds”, it produces young green argan fruits (*ag^wmmu*). When it has finished producing young fruits, it produces the big fresh argan fruits (*ablziz*). The *ablziz* is like the apricot. When it has become ripe, it is like (the shape of) a date and then we call it *afyyaš*.

When it has produced *afyyaš*, the fruits fall on the ground under the tree. Then there is a public announcement in the village. They say: “The argan fruits have fallen down, access to the argan tree area is now prohibited (*agdal*), let no animals, no cows, no sheep, no camels go there, access is forbidden. If we find the animals of anyone in the argan area, then a big animal of his herd must be slaughtered (as a fine).”

The custom concerning *agdal* is as follows: they surround (the argan tree area) with cairns (*tikrkurin*), so that people know that access is forbidden. The day they annul the prohibition (lit.: open the *agdal*), there is again a public announcement saying: “The restriction is now lifted” (lit.: the *agdal* is now open).

Then women, children and men go there and collect ripe argan fruits. They put in baskets what they have collected and bring it to a good place (where) they pour the argan fruits out and make a heap. When they have collected all the fruits, they place a fence around the heap to keep the animals at bay. Anyone who does not own argan trees, collects what has been left on or under the trees.

People don't bother to harvest argan fruits from trees standing on steep cliffs. Animals climb to them and collect them. When these animals take a rest in the shade at midday, they digest these fruits in their stomach. People collect the “nuts” digested by these animals, but they keep them apart, because there is good argan oil in them, surpassing that of argan fruits collected in the normal fashion. There is a nice strong flavour to them and that is why they keep them apart.

People take pack animals to the heap of argan fruits in the argan area. They fill the panniers with them and take them, on the back of their pack animals, to their homes, where they store them. When they have finished taking the argan fruits home, they remove the pulpy part of the fruit with a stone. They put the pulp (*alig*) on one side and the argan “nuts” (*uzlim*) on the other. The pulp is eaten by cattle and camels. They pound the argan nuts with a stone. When they have broken it, they take the “argan kernels” (*tiznin*) out of the argan nut. They throw the broken nutshells (*irgn*) in the fire and they roast the “argan kernels”

28. Farmers in Morocco make use of the Muslim calendar and the Julian calendar. The latter one is used in relation to agricultural life and festivals.

on an iron plate above a fire. When they have roasted them, they pour the argan kernels onto a flat basket (*tasgg^wit*) and bring them to the argan quern, where they grind them. The ground argan kernels are like porridge, we call it the paste (*amlu*) of argan kernels because there is also the paste of almonds (*amlu n tznin n lluz*). The *amlu* is poured onto a plate for pressing. When they press with their hands, they add some water. At first it looks like sheep droppings, when it is mixed together it looks like dough.

Then it is pressed. They take the argan kernel pulp cake (*tazgmmut*) and shape it into loaves. They press and store (the argan oil). They take the argan oil and pour it into a gourd. They give the argan kernel pulp cakes (as a concentrate) to camels and bulls in the ploughing season. Camels usually eat *tazgmmut* in winter, because it is good (for them).

Cooperation (*tiwizi*) during the harvest of the argan fruits and the argan oil production. When people (are allowed to) go and collect (fallen argan fruits), the person who has a lot of ripe argan fruits (*afyyaš*) may ask for help in collecting them. When the moment to collect them has come, there is a host of women and children around. The owner of the argan tree area rejoices. When they go for a siesta, he offers them a copious meal. When the women have finished, he notifies them saying: “Please, (I would like to have the help of some) women (*timrragin*) who break argan nuts.” If this is the case, there are many women (who are willing to do this). When they go to his house, there is joy and ululating. People say (to one another): “What is going on today at the house of So-and-so?” “Well, he has women around who (are helping him) break argan nuts.” Some of them do the breaking, others divide the argan kernels from the broken nutshells (*irgn*), again others roast the argan kernels on an iron plate. When they have roasted them, they pour them into a basket. One other among the women grinds them on an argan kernel quern. They spread the paste out on a plate for pressing (*taqşriyt n izmi*) until the *amlu* paste comes out. One woman grinds, another presses. When she has pressed the argan out, she makes *lbsis*²⁹ from the newly made argan for the women who had been breaking the argan nut open. This is the custom of the women who break the argan nut open.

2.2. Roux 1955 : 34 (Ashtukn dialect)

Argan. Argan ix imk ijwajjg ar as nttini iskr ajdur. Ix iđh̄ warraw nns, ar as nttini aṛray. Ix imqquṛ, mišš imllul sul, ar as nttini zṛgmmu. Ix iwrray, inu, ar as nttini bilziz. Ix yasus, iqqaṛ, ar as nttini tifiyyišt.

Ix g^wran mddn tifiyyišt, sfyyšn tt, tg alig d waqqayn, grun aqqayn, fkin alig i

29. *Lbsis* is a paste made of flour made of roasted grains and argan oil, mixed with a variety of sweet or spicy ingredients. It is served on ceremonial occasions.

laksab : izgarn d iřeman d wulli. Isrdan d iy^wyal d yisan ur a řttan alig ařku iřřa. Asin d aqqayn lli, rgin tn zund lluz d lrggae, gin irgn d tiřnin. Irgn, ar srsn ssryan lefiyt ; tiřnin ar tnt sslayn x uflun zund tirufin, řđin tnt x uzrg zund lluz d lrggae, gin amlu zund lejin lli x a iskar uřřfaj řřfnj, ar t řmmant tmřarin. Manik a ys skarnt? Ar as ttgant imikk n waman, ar t rwwint s ifassn nnsnt imikk n tssaet, gint as dax imikk n waman, ar t dax rwwint řik lli, řik lli ar kix izli wargan, třli tzgmut ; tazgmut ann tga zund tummit n lejin lli bahra iddzn, ar sis ttelafn mddn laksab nna ra ad řhun, řřařea (tdařea, třlb, tuf) kra s a ittelaf yan x tmřin ula asngar. Argan ar t ttggan mddn x kra n ufřku iyusn, ar sis ttsxxan tiram nnsn zund zzit d wudi, ar sis ssnwan tifiyyi, ar sis řřřurmt tmřarin tik^wyad nnsnt (iřukak nnsnt, iguyya nnsnt) ar sis ssryan mddn lqndil.

Tggut bahra nnfiat n wargan : akřřuđ nns iga asřyu, iga azzgr n lbnya ; ayyawn d ifrawn nns gan asřd i lksibt : iřeman d wulli, lřayr nnsn uhu ; tifiyyiřt nns llan gis iqariđn, wa nna ra stt izznz řikann, iřřiyř tt, ifk agalim (alig) i laksab ; irgn asřyu i lefiyt, tiřnin ttiwřđint, ittiwřmi umlu ; tazgmut i laksab ; argan at t řřin mddn nx t zznzan ; ar ittiwřkir řřabun x wargan ; ur illi řřubuh nns (iga luhman).

Lluz d nnta d lrggae ar tn rragan mddn ; wanna t izznz hatinn, wa nna ur iran iřř t řikann nx t izđa, ig amlu ar t iřtta d uřřum nnta d yan d sis yiwi lřal. Ix rat t řđin ar t sslayn zund tirufin ar t řřađn x uzrg, ar nn fllas tffin argan x ttiřt n uzrg fad a izđ, ix as t ur gan ur ra izđ, ar ittetty^way x uzrg. (Ařtuken)

Translation :

As soon as the argan tree is in bloom, we say that it makes *ajdur* “argan flower”. When its small fruit (lit. : child) is visible, we call it *ayray* “newly developed fruit”. If it is big, but still white we call it *zrgmmu*. When it has turned yellow and has become ripe, we call it *bilřiz*. When shaken down from a tree, and dried, we call it *tifiyyiřt*.

When people have collected the dry argan fruits that have fallen down, they remove the outside pulp layer ; (a dried argan fruit consists of) pulp (*alig*) and nuts (*aqqayn*) ; they collect the nuts and give the pulp to the animals : the oxen, the camels and the sheep. Mules, donkeys and horses don't eat argan pulp, because it is too bitter for them. They take these argan nuts, break them open like (they do) with almonds and nuts, resulting in broken argan nutshells (*irgn*) and argan kernels (*tiřnin*). They throw the nutshells in the fire, they roast the

kernels on an iron plate like they do with grain, grind them on a quern like they do with almonds and nuts. It has become a paste (*amlu*) similar to the dough of which the doughnut maker makes doughnuts. Women press that out. How do they do that? They add some water and knead it with their hands for some time and then add some water again. They mix it again until the argan oil and the kernel pulp separate. This pulp is like a compact dough (*tummit*). They feed young animals with it, that they want to fatten, it is better than fodder from barley or maize. The argan is handled with clean tools, people use it as edible oil in their meals like olive oil or butter. They bake meat with it and women oil their braids with it and people burn oil-lamps with it.

Argan is very useful : its wood can be used as firewood and as roofbeams in buildings. Young shoots and leaves are fodder for animals : camels and sheep, but not for other animals. Its fruit is money, the same for the one who sells it. He can separate fruit pulp from argan nuts, he can give the pulp to the beasts, the broken nutshells are fuel for the fire, the argan kernels can be ground, *amlu* can be pressed out of it. The cattle cake (*tazgmmut*) is for the animals. People either consume argan or sell it. From it argan soap can be made, that has no equal.

People remove also the shells of almonds and nuts. The one may sell it, another one may not want that, he (rather) eats it or grinds it so that it is *amlu*, (a paste that) he, or any guest, eats with bread. When they want to grind it, they roast it first, like roasted grain (*tirufin*). They grind it in a quern, they pour argan (oil) into the “eye” of the quern in order to grind. If they don’t do that, it will not grind, it will get stuck in the quern.

2.2.1 Roux’s notes to this text (1955 : 34-36) (*Aštukén*)

La complexité du vocabulaire relatif à l’arganier nous a paru justifier l’abondance particulière des notes qui suivent. Elles concernent l’arganier chez les *Aštukén*.

argan (*wa*) (coll.) “arganier et huile d’argan”.

targant (*ta*) pl. *targinin* “arganier (nomen unitatis et pluriel de petit nombre)”.

argginn (*wa*) pluriel de petit nombre d’*argan*, “quelques arganiers”.

argginn s’appliquerait à des arganiers plus grands que les *targinin*.

ayyaw (*wa*), pl. *ayyawn* “rejet partant de la souche” ;

tag^wntift “petit arganier”.

lxlf “nouvelles pousses et nouvelles feuilles”.

asnnan pl. *isnnanen* “petite épine sortant du petit fruit par la fleur”.

ajdur, pl. *ijdurn* ou *ijdar* “fleur d’arganier”.

ayray, pl. *iyrayn* “fruit à peine formé”.

admam, pl. *idmamn* “fruit qui commence à se former”; il est d’abord rougeâtre; lorsqu’il devient vert il est appelé :

zrgmmu (coll.), *tazrgmmut* (nomen unitatis). Lorsque le *zrgmmu* jaunit et mûrit il est appelé :

bilziz (coll.), nomen unitatis *tibilzizt*, pl. *tibilzizin*. Après le *bilziz*, lorsque le fruit est sec il est appelé, qu’il soit resté sur l’arbre ou qu’il soit tombé :

tifiyyišt (coll.), ou *tiffiyyišt*, pluriel de petit nombre : *tifiyyušin*.

La *tifiyyišt* restée sur l’arbre est gaulée (*zwi*, habitatif *zwwi*, nomen actionis *azway*; nomen instrumentalis, *azdway*, pl. *izdwayn* “gaule”).

La *tifiyyišt* tombée sur le sol est ramassée (*gru*, habitatif *grru*, nomen actionis : *tigri*, nomen agentis : *amgraw*, pl. *imgrawn*).

Le tout est mis dans des paniers (*ag^wnin*, pl. *ig^wninn*, dim. *tag^wnint*) faits avec la plante *inif* ou *tazgawt*, pl. *tizgiwin* faits en palmier-nain (*tiznirt*) ou en palmes (*ifrawn*) de palmier-dattier (*tayniwt*, pl. *tayniwin*); la *tazgawt* contient trois *ig^wninn*; l’*ag^wnin* lui-même contient trois *tig^wninin*, une et demie dans chaque poche, *tamnaṭṭ*, pl. *timnaḍin*.

Le tout est transporté et emmagasiné dans les pièces du rez-de-chaussée (*lbyut n wasa*) pour éviter les dommages causés par les rats. On les retire au fur et à mesure des besoins, mais il arrive qu’on les laisse plusieurs années. Les femmes pendant les intervalles des repas, prennent les *tifiyyišt* et les concassent sur une pierre dite : *assarg^w*, pl. *issurag* et à l’aide d’une pierre dite *taggunt n wawrag*, pl. *tigguna n wawrag* ou plutôt *taggunt n tifiyyišt* pour séparer (*sfyyš* ou *šfiyyš*, habitatif *sfyyiš* ou *šfiyyiš*, nomen actionis *asfyyš* ou *ašfiyyš*) l’enveloppe sèche (*agalim* pl. *igalimn* ou *alig* (*wa*) pl. *ilign*) du noyau (*aqqa*, pl. *aqqayn*). L’*agalim* est donné aux animaux (chameaux, bœufs, moutons, chèvres); les chevaux, les ânes et les mulets (*lbhaym n wazag*) ne le mangent pas.

Les femmes mettent les noyaux *aqqayn* dans les paniers *ig^wninn*, puis les concassent (*rg*, habitatif *rrag*, nomen actionis *awrag*), sur une pierre *assarg^w n wawrag* à l’aide d’une pierre *taggunt n wawrag*. Les concasseuses sont appelées *tamragt*, pl. *timragin*; le pluriel masculin *imragn* est employé dans l’expression : “*Flan, llan dars imragn*” “On concasse chez un tel; il bénéficie d’une entr’aide collective (*tiwizi*)”. Lorsque le noyau est cassé, les hommes séparent l’amande (nomen unitatis *tiznint*, pluriel *tiznin*) des morceaux (*irgn*) de la coque (*irg*) et mettent les amandes dans un panier (*tag^wnint*).

Le débris de la coque, *irgn*, tombés sur le sol sont utilisés comme combustible.

Les amandes *tiznin* sont torréfiés (*ssli*, habitatif *sslay*, nomen actionis *asslay*) dans une plat en terre (*aḥḥun*, pl. *ifḥlan*) posé sur le feu. Les amandes torréfiées sont moulues dans un moulin à bras appelé *azrg n tiznin*. Du moulin sort par un conduit (*ils n uzrg*) une espèce de pâte (*amlu*) qui tombe dans un récipient en terre appelé *tazlaft n izmi* muni d’un conduit (*ils n tzlaft*). La femme verse sur cette pâte, à l’aide d’une cuillère à pot (*ay^wnja*, pl. *iyⁿjawn*) un peu d’eau tiède (*aman ulbanin*)

et mélange le tout d'une main, jusqu'à ce que la pâte se forme en grumeaux ressemblant à du couscous. Les grumeaux s'agglomèrent et forment la *tazgmmut* ou *tazgmut*, nageant dans l'huile d'argan (*argan*). La *tazgmmut* est pressée (*zm*, habitatif *zmma*, nomen actionis *izmi*) pour extraire l'huile qu'elle contient encore. L'huile est mise dans des récipients faits de citrouilles sèches (*taxsayt n wargan*) et la *tazgmmut* est donnée au bétail (chameaux, bœufs, moutons, chèvres).

2.3. Roux 1955 : 62, text 31 (Lakhsas dialect)

Tafiyyušt. Luqt n tfiyyušt ar tḡḡraḡn mddn is qqnn tafiyyušt ar kiḡ kullu tasus, tqqaḡ ḡ wakal. Ašku iḡ tt ur qqinn ḡkad kulmma d iḡḡn ḡ wargan ḡawḡen t mddn, swa tḡa ti nnsn swa uhu. Fakudann wa nna ittyamaḡn ar yakka linḡaf. Kud nna tqqaḡ ḡḡḡn is tt rḡmn. Kuyan iddu s warginn nns, ar tt ḡrrun, ar tt ttxzann ḡ iḡhuna, ar tt sfiyyušn kra s kra, ar rragḡn aqqayn, sslin tiḡnin, ḡḡḡn tnt, ḡmin amlu, ḡlin argan d tḡgmmut, ar šttan argan, ar akkan tazgmmut i lbḡaym nnsn. (Laxḡaḡ)

Translation :

Ripe argan fruits (*tafiyyušt*) : When the time of the ripe argan fruits (*tafiyyušt*) has come, people publicly announce the closure of the area concerned, until all the argan fruits have fallen down and dry on the ground. If they were not to close the area in this way, people would take away all the fallen argan fruits, whether it is theirs or not. At that time (i.e. when access to the argan area is prohibited), the person who is caught, must pay a fine (*linḡaf*). When the ripe argan fruits are dry, they announce that they open (the area for the harvest). Each person goes to his own argan trees and they collect the ripe argan fruits, store them (at home) in rooms, remove the outer pulp layer, one quantity after the other, they break the argan nut (*aqqayn*) open, roast the argan kernels (*tiḡnin*), grind them and press the argan paste (*amlu*) and separate the argan oil from the (squeezed out) argan kernel cake (*tazgmmut*). They (themselves) consume the argan oil and give the argan kernel cake to their animals.

2.4. Roux 1955 : 105, line 7 - line 22 (Ayt Brayyim)

Nttat a ḡ a skarn middn lidam lli mu ttinin ḡ lḡudun zḡit argan, ar tt ḡrrun id bab nns iḡ sul tḡa tafiyyušt izḡzawn, syrn tt ḡ iggi izurn ar kiḡ tqqaḡ, sfiyyšen tt, ar as tḡkkisn ilm nns lli mu ism aḡalim. Iḡ tt sfiyyšn rḡin ḡis aqqayn nns. Iḡ tn rḡan ḡrun ḡisn tiḡnin. Iḡ tnt ḡrun qqaman irḡn. Amma aḡalim ar t akkan i ireman

d wulli, ašku ar tn bahhra ittnnfëu iy t ššan; amma irgn ar srsn ssryan lëfit. Amma tiznin, ar tnt zḡaḡn, gint amlu; amḡn amlu yann, skrn as kra n lḡilt, ar kud nna imun, ḡmin t. Iḡ t ḡman iffḡ d gis lidam, uk^wan tagur nn aḡar tḡgmmut; lidam ar t nštta zud zzit d wudi; tazgmmut ann ar gis skarn tiebbad, ar kud nna tqḡur. Ar tt akkan i iḡeman d lbhaymn. Iga leada n yayt udrar, ar skarn lbsis ḡ wargan lli nn igḡ^wran ḡ uḡḡri nna ḡ ḡman tiznin, ar gis skarn tiebbad, uk^wan ar t aḡtan i ḡwi nna llanin ḡ tḡmmi; ar day aḡtan iebbād n tḡgmmut lli behḡra izman, ar tt ssumumn s imawn nnsn, ar gis skarn tag^wḡit ḡ tuzḡumt nns, uk^wan ar tt inn ḡmman s ifassn nnsn ḡ imawn nnsn.

Translation³⁰:

People prepare an oil which they call argan oil in the towns, its owners gather it when the nut is still green, they let it dry on the rooftops until it is hard, they clean it and remove it from its husk which is called *agalim*. When they have separated it they crack its shell; when they have cracked them they gather their kernels (*tiznin*). When they have gathered them the argan nut shells remain. As for the *agalim* they give it to the camels and sheep because it benefits them a lot if they eat it; but they use the shells for the fire. As for the kernels they grind them, they become argan nut paste; they take that paste and, using some technique, compact it and squeeze it. When they have squeezed it, oil comes from it, and just a dough (*tazgmmut*) remains. We eat the oil like olive oil or butter; they make balls from the dough, and (leave them) until they are dry. They give it to the camels and (other) animals. It is the custom of the people of the hills to make *lbsis* from the last argan on the flat plates where they have squeezed the kernels; they make balls of dough from it and then divide it between whoever there is in the house. They also divide the balls of dough which have been thoroughly squeezed, they suck with their mouths, make a hole in the middle of it and squeeze it with their hands and their mouths.

2.5. Fonds Roux 30.1.1. (Ashtukn dialect)

Argan : Ix tssmḡi tagant argan, ar grrun mddn tifyyišt nns; tifyyišt ann tḡa kullu lbaraka : ar ttuzḡint tiznin nns, gint zzit n wargan; ar šttan laksab alig nns d tḡgmmut nns, tḡy lëfiyt s irgn nns.

30. This translation is taken from John Cooper, The English translation of Arsène Roux's *La vie berbère par les textes* [forthcoming].

Translation :

Argan : When the area outside the village has produced argan, people go and collect the ripe argan fruits (*tifyyišt*). These fruits are a true blessing (*ibaraka*). Women grind the kernels (inside) them and make argan oil from it. Cattle eat the pulp debris (i.e. the outside pulpy layer of the argan fruit) and the squeezed out argan kernel cake and they make a fire with the broken argan nut shells.

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