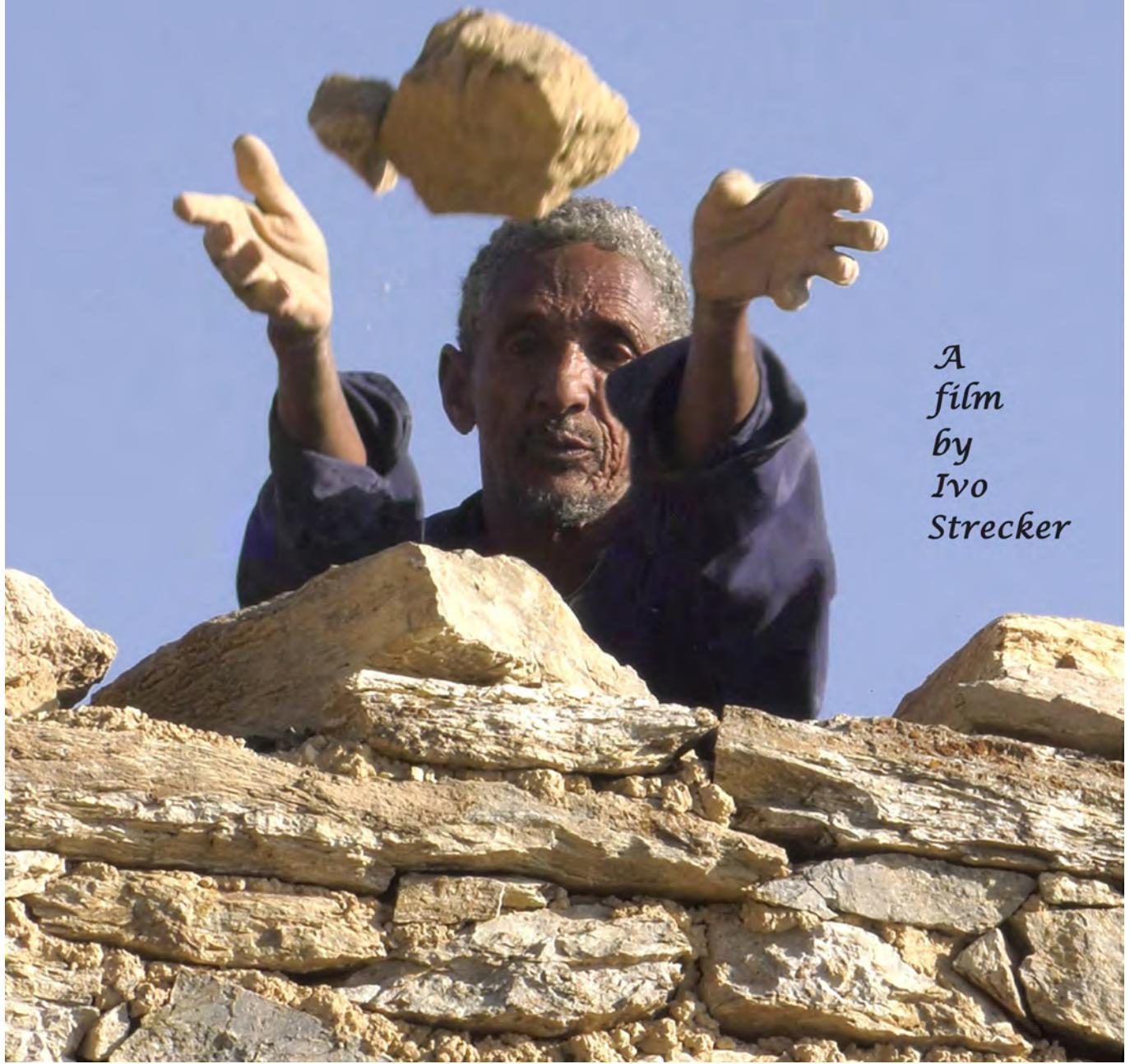


# *Abraham & Sarah*

## *Creators of a productive landscape*

A  
film  
by  
Ivo  
Strecker





HAGOS MASHISHO and DESTA GIDEY  
live in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia,  
*en route* to the monastery of *Gundagundo*.  
Because of their great hospitality  
people have named them  
ABRAHAM and SARAH.

A film in the MPI series  
**GUARDIANS OF PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES**  
(Editor: Ivo Strecker)

\*

Selected Images, Dialogues and Commentary





As you can see,  
this is my wheat  
field.

I prepared it,  
and I am glad  
that you have  
come to see it.

I am fine!  
I am fine!  
I am fine!

Since our marriage we have worked together.  
Both the man and the woman do as best as they can.  
We buy the sickles from local traders.  
The left hand takes the wheat and the right one cuts it.  
After we cut it we collect it.  
Then we bind it and carry it to the threshing place.



*This is your maize field!*

Yes it is.

It was difficult to plough.

Well... we use this for ourselves.

Look at the yield yourselves.

We got this land from the Government,  
but we pay taxes for it.

*For what do you use the straw?*

For cows and other animals as feed.



*So, is this year better?*

Yes, this is a better harvest.

But look at the yield... Last year we didn't even harvest at all;  
not even enough for the animals.

We will thresh this.



All crops have their sowing time: maize in April and wheat in June.



As it brings food,  
as it brings a great  
season, Shemal you  
better work hard!

May you live as  
long as a rock!

Elemo, you better work  
hard, so that we have a  
good harvest!

Listen when I say  
ho-ho..ho..ho!

Ho-ho-ho... it's great!  
Aee...! it brings  
bread to the mouth,  
and beer to go with it.

My sons help thresh the barley: Welday, Yemane and Hayelom.



My Kuhila,  
you are  
the light of  
my house!

Elemo,  
you better  
work hard  
all day,  
so that we have  
a nice harvest!

Everything needs teaching. Like our children at school, the donkeys and oxen must be trained. Once they have learned, they work well.

I sing for my animals, to bless their work:

A blessing to the threshing field, and faith to the country!

Trample down! Bring it down! Ah... put it down!

Stamp down the seeds, seeds on your eyes,  
your legs, your back and tails!

*Tell us about the fork.*

I cut it from a tree  
and then bend it  
over the fire.

This is a place for  
the right wind.

The seeds are  
heavier than the  
chaff, so the fork  
and the wind  
separate them  
easily.



Here we separate small stones and soil from the seeds, and there are also other unwanted pieces to get rid of. Like the fork and brush the basket is used for separation.



*Tell us about  
the brush.*

We make it from  
the Serdi grass.

We fasten it  
around two sticks,  
binding each bunch  
one by one.

*So you use it for final  
cleaning?*

Yes, we do.

Hurry up!

Bring a piece of  
wood to make  
a cross.

Keep the goats away! Please, keep away the cattle, send them down!

First we make a cross, and use it to bless the grain.  
The plants are for abundance.

In the name of the Father,  
the Son and the Holy Ghost.  
Amen.

Our Father, who art in Heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.  
Give us our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses.  
Deliver us from evil.



Oh Virgin Mary, peace be unto Thee.  
Blessed is the fruit of Thy womb.  
Amen.

St. Mary, give me, give me! Bless it!  
Give me plenty, bless it St. Mary!  
Consider my labour! Bless this! Give me!  
Consider my labour! Give me!  
Make it full!



Here the terrace has broken away.  
The heavy rain pulled it down,  
and washed away the grain below.  
I thought the wall was strong enough.  
The other part of the wall was also washed away.

*When did the wall collapse?*  
Early in the morning.  
The water seeped through the ground  
and took the wall away.

*Were you worried when the wall collapsed?*  
Since it happened early in the morning,  
we thought it was the wind, which had shaken  
the trees down there the days before.

We were in the house  
when we heard a strong, angry sound.  
We thought it was the wind again,  
but then we realized that the terrace had gone.

It will take much work to rebuild the terrace.  
We are not sure if it can be done with what we have.  
If we can not do it alone, I will ask the government for help.  
We will try our best.

*We have come to see how you repair the terrace. How is it going?*

I asked the community and prepared food for them.

Now we are working as you can see.

Because I can't do it alone, and the terrace is very big.

I am on my way to check whether Desta and Roman have made lunch.



Clap!

Dance!

Oh, dear girl,  
come and play with me.

The girl from Saharti,  
if you stay in  
the house all day,  
you may go crazy.

Younger girl,  
come and play with me,  
come and talk to me.  
If not, I may go crazy.

Abraham and Sarah,  
of noble ancestors,  
you feed the hungry...  
You are always generous.  
May you live an everlasting life.  
I sing to celebrate Hagos.  
I celebrate Sarah as well.  
Well-mannered Hagos Mashisho!  
Son of noble people,  
I thank you forever.



Let me say a few words.

We didn't expect the terrace to fall,  
and then the government could not help.  
So I want to thank you for your assistance.

You are loyal to your friends.

May God repay you for what you have done.

Earlier the sun challenged them,  
but now the clouds rising from the sea  
have cooled the air and brought them relief.



This stone fits well!

Son of Amdom,  
jump and  
throw it down!

Now we go up  
to bring  
more stones.

Abraha come up!

They dig out the stones up there and bring them down here.  
Come all of you!



It went down well!



The monkey is doing his task,  
waiting to eat my seeds.

Solomon, bring more seeds!





**My son-in-law is helping me.**

Oh! Zewda,  
move on please!!!  
You make me  
happy!  
Move on!  
Stop!  
Zewda!  
Come on!  
Move on!  
No... be in line!  
Finish the line!

I work on the terrace side by side with ploughing. Most of it I do myself, but sometimes my children help. The big stones need to be moved, they are not good for the seeds.

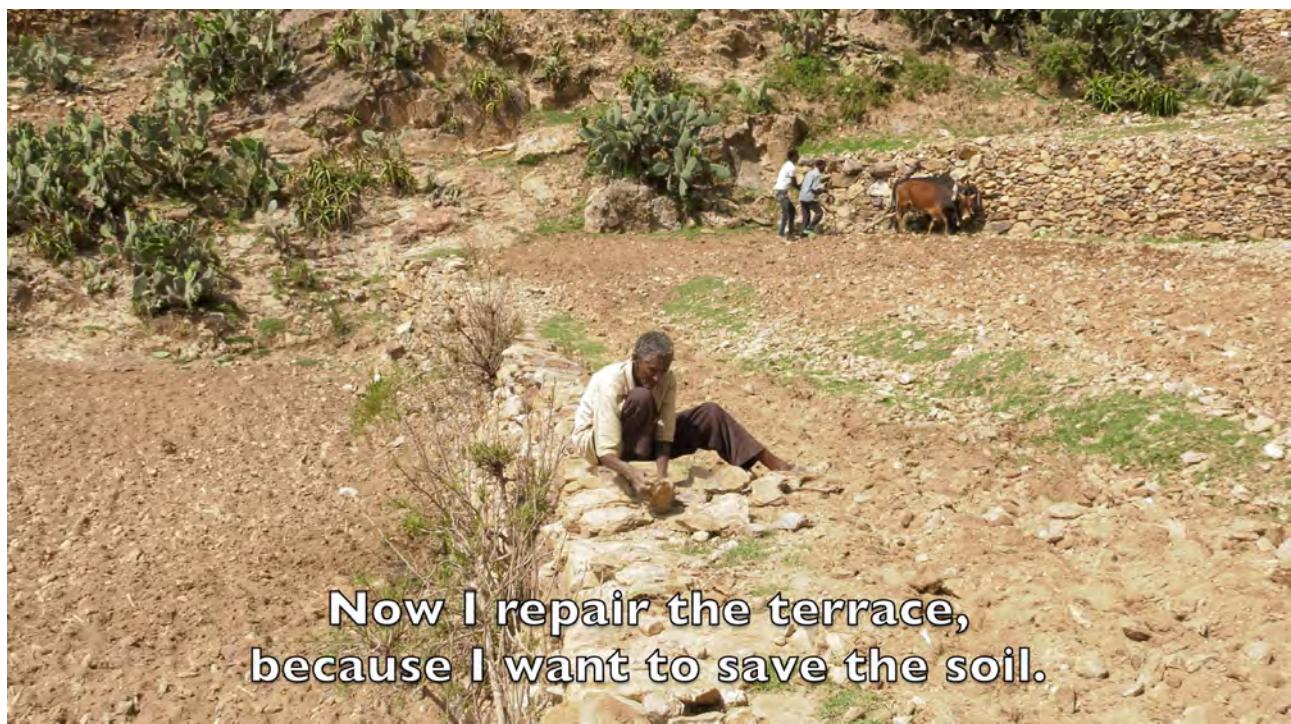
*Your hands are very strong!*

Yes, I always rush to work. Even I don't care whether I hurt myself. Look how rough my hands are. They are like this because I am addicted to work. I am always in a rush. The harder I work, the stronger I become.

If I don't work, I get weak.

*So you handle the stones one by one!*

Yes, I place them on the edge.



**Now I repair the terrace,  
because I want to save the soil.**

We finished sowing below and now will plough the field above.



**We thank you for your visit,**

Move them  
to the center!

Demolish  
that corner!

Leave some  
earth above  
the wall, it  
will protect  
the field  
from  
erosion.

Do not  
plough  
below this  
line!

Demolish  
that corner!

Level the  
field!

Lift the  
plough  
when you  
hit a rock!

*How long did it take you to rebuild the terrace?*

It took about four months.

This season, we hope for a good harvest.

We will build small terraces below  
as a support to the main terrace.

*What will you plant here now?*

I will sow wheat.

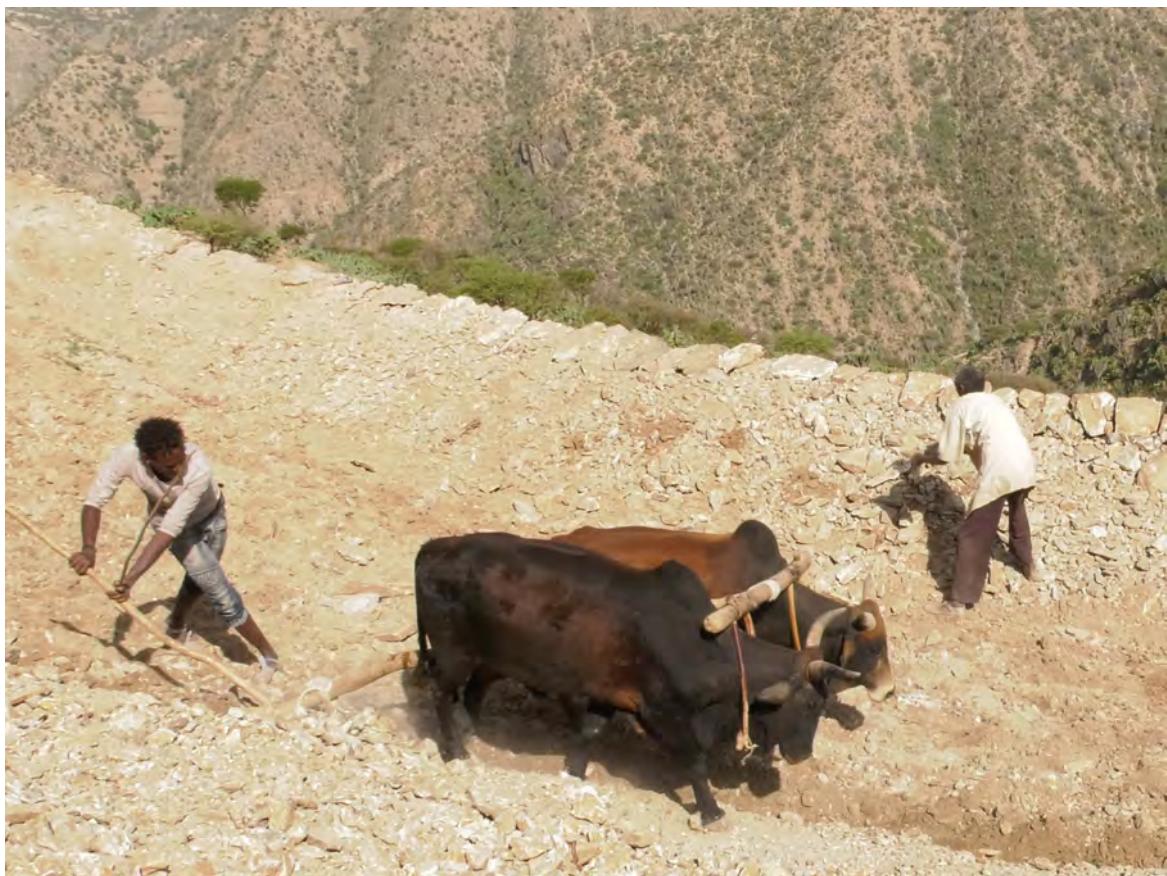
We will use manure as fertilizer.

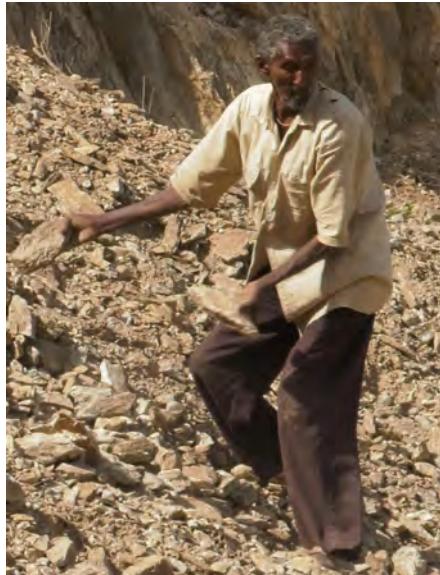
Then we leave it for some time,  
until it is ready for use.

We thank you for your visit,  
and I hope you will join us for the harvest.



Our father would have cursed us if we had not helped rebuild the terrace.





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*Special thanks to:*

Max Planck Institute  
of Social Anthropology  
Halle/Saale, Germany

Departments of  
Theatre Arts & Anthropology  
Mekelle University, Ethiopia

Feleke Woldeyes  
Guenther Schlee  
Peter Kalvelage  
Viola Laske  
Wolbert Smidt

*Finally we like to express our gratitude to  
Hagos Mashisho & Desta Gidey*

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