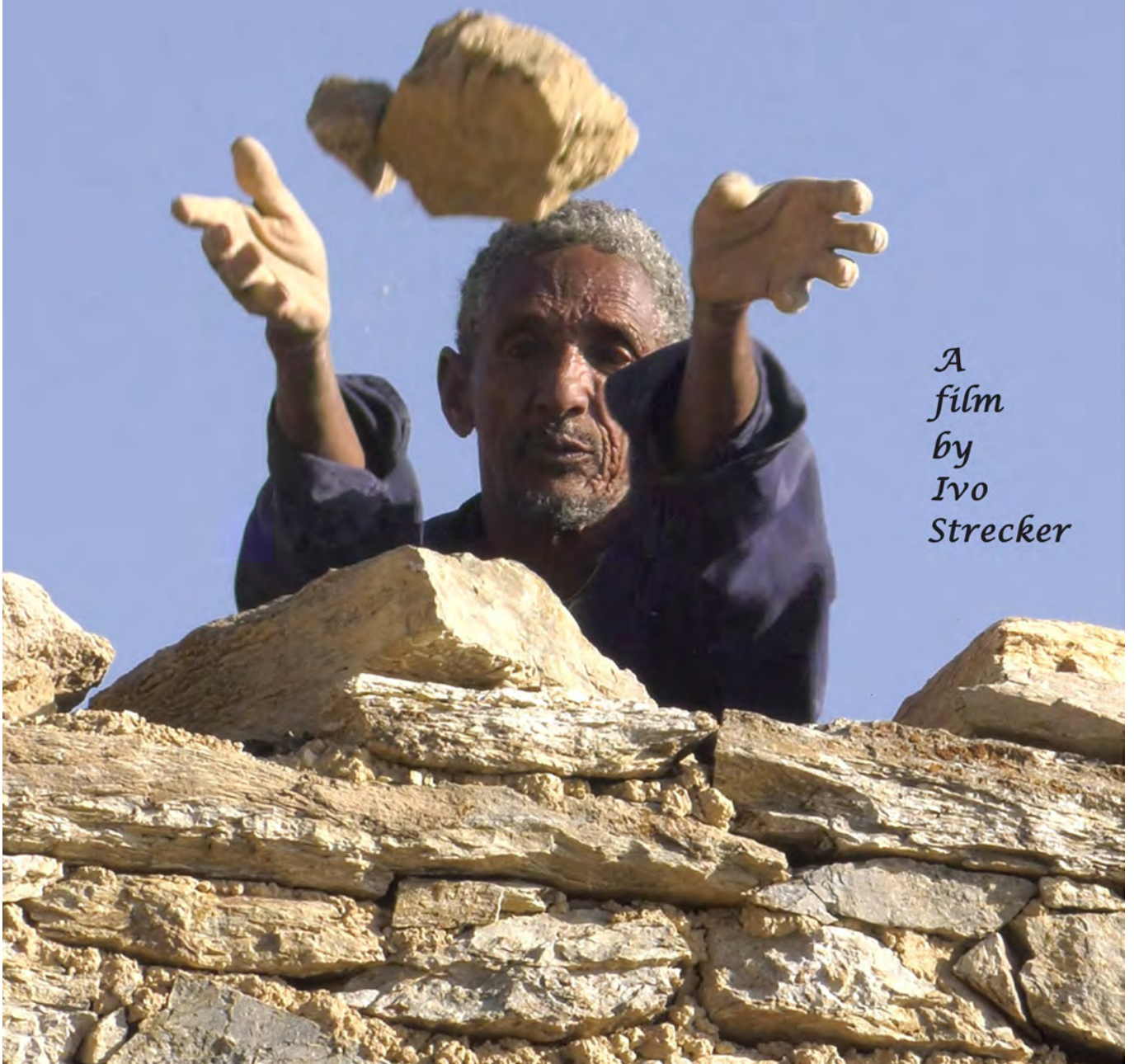


Abraham & Sarah

*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: Weday, 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.



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.

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.



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!



One, two, three!

It went down well!



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

Solomon, bring more seeds!





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.



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



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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